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THE
GOSPEL IN GREAT BRITAIN;

FROM
ST. PATRICK TO JOHN KNOX AND JOHN WESLEY.

OPINIONS OF THEOLOGIANS AND THE PRESS.

"'The Gospel in Great Britain' is an excellent production, and fitted to be at once popular and useful. The estimate it gives of the great standard-bearers referred to seems to be most just. And the whole work, which must have cost a great deal of labour, does the author very great credit."—*Principal Chalmers, D.D., London.*

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THE
GOSPEL IN GREAT BRITAIN;

FROM
ST. PATRICK TO JOHN KNOX AND
JOHN WESLEY.

BY THE
REV. SAMUEL MACNAUGHTON, M.A.,
AUTHOR OF "JOY IN JESUS: MEMORIALS OF BELLA DARLING;"
"OUR CHILDREN FOR CHRIST;" "THE WINES OF SCRIPTURE;"
"THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN RELATION
TO THE TEMPERANCE REFORM" (A PRIZE ESSAY);
"LILY AND LEANDER—A POEM OF LIFE,"
ETC., ETC.

SECOND EDITION.

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1890.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE First Edition of "The Gospel in Great Britain" received such a cordial welcome from the Press and the public that a Second Edition is already called for. The author is gratified and encouraged by the fact that the Press, without a single exception, has given most appreciative notices of it, and, in many instances, spoken of its fairness in matters of controversy, and its fascinating interest as a story of the Gospel throughout the centuries. It is again sent forth on its mission of instructing the young in the various Churches of Christendom on a subject of profound interest, in the confident expectation that it will continue to receive a warm welcome from the ministry and the Press, and prove a blessing to the young people attending our Sunday Schools and Bible Classes.

S. M'N.

ADDISON ROAD, PRESTON,

November, 1889.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Lectures, for the most part, were originally prepared without any idea of publication. The deep interest taken in the first part of the series by Evangelical Churchmen and some who had been brought up in the Roman Catholic communion, as well as by the members of my own Church, led me to entertain the idea of giving greater publicity to them than could be obtained by the living voice. The interest which attended their delivery far exceeded my own expectations. Commencing with the intention of delivering a few lectures on "The Early Ages of Christianity in Great Britain," with the object of showing that this country was not indebted to the Church of Rome for the Gospel, but that a pure evangel was preached and embraced long before the arrival of the first Roman Catholic missionaries, the design of the present volume grew upon me—namely, to trace an evangelical succession, outside of Rome and opposed to it, all adown the centuries and to note with some degree of fulness the prominent evangelical agencies that brought blessing to the nation at different periods. Hence, special prominence is given to the

noble work of St. Patrick, Columba, and others in the early centuries; William the Conqueror, Edward III., and Wycliffe before the Reformation period; Tyndale, Bilney, Latimer, Cranmer, and Knox at the time of the Reformation; Howe, Baxter, Bunyan, and Henry after the Restoration; and Whitefield and the Wesleys in the eighteen century.

Another special feature in the design of this volume was to include as much of the civil history of the nation, with full and accurate dates, as was deemed necessary to illustrate the history of the Church and the Gospel, and to explain and account for the apparent temporary failure of thoroughly Scriptural agencies through severe and protracted persecution; as, for example, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, when Presbyterian Nonconformity was all but stamped out in England by persistent persecution. It is shown, however, that the evangelical spirit and Scriptural polity of Presbyterianism was perpetuated under another name in Methodism. Historical research will also show that, when the blighting influence of Arianism and Socinianism spread over the land like a deadly pall, and was entering Nonconformist pulpits as well as those of the Church of England; when Presbyterian government under the exigencies of the times was practically suspended, so that false doctrine could not be checked and false teachers could not be excluded,—the Evangelical Presbyterians, for the most part, cast in their lot with the Methodists, and helped in no small degree to build up

that great evangelical fabric which bulks so largely in the ecclesiastical history of the last century.

It may not be out of place to remark that in the preparation of this volume a very large number of standard authorities have been consulted, and great care has been taken, amid the conflicting statements of interested parties, to arrive as nearly as possible at the actual facts. For fuller information on the several periods touched upon in this volume, the earnest student may consult Patrick's "Confessiones," or Autobiography; Bede's "Ecclesiastical History;" and numerous authorities cited by D'Aubigné in his "History of the Reformation;" Fuller's "Church History;" Wycliffe's "Tracts and Treatises;" Foxe's "Acts and Monuments," and "Book of Martyrs;" Lewis' "History of Wycliffe;" Vaughan's "Life of Wycliffe;" Erasmus' "Letters;" Tyndale and Fryth's Works; Latimer's "Sermons;" Strype's "Ecclesiastical Memorials;" Life of Parker, Whitgift, Cranmer, &c.; Lord Herbert's "Life of Henry VIII.;" Burnet's "History of the Reformation," and "History of His Own Times;" Somers' "Tracts;" M'Crie's "Life of Knox," and "History of the Scottish Church;" Macaulay's "History of England;" Hallam's "Constitutional History of England;" Stevens' "History of Methodism;" and Kurtz's "History of the Christian Church."

The reader must not expect to find in this volume any attempt at thrilling description or beauty of style. The author's aim has been, by brevity and simplicity of style, to make the facts of history speak for them-

selves, hoping to create interest in the subject by a simple narrative of facts rather than by any fictitious colouring or imaginative ornamentation. Although these lectures have been prepared, one every week without intermission, amid all the duties of a busy pastorate, yet the author is not without hope that the volume will be welcomed by many who have not had time to master the literature of such an extensive subject. All who have made the attempt know well that it is a work of years. It seemed to the author that a handy book for busy men on this subject was much needed, and the celebration of the Quincentenary of our first great Reformer during the present year makes the need urgent. If the following pages will contribute in any degree to a clearer understanding of the history of the Gospel in Great Britain by sound Protestants, the author will feel devoutly thankful to the Great Head of the Church for being guided and blessed in the undertaking.

PRESTON, *May*, 1884.

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THE GOSPEL IN GREAT BRITAIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY AGES OF CHRISTIANITY IN SCOTLAND.

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.”—JUDE 3.

PROBABLY in no period of the world's history was this earnest exhortation more strikingly fulfilled than in the earlier centuries of Scottish history. In meditating upon the great work accomplished for Scotland by the illustrious and fearless reformer, John Knox, the mind is naturally carried back to a much earlier period, when the religion of Christ was first preached and gladly embraced in Scotland. It is generally assumed that the pure Scriptural doctrine and government of the Presbyterian Church dates no farther back than the year 1560, when the Scottish people, under their great leader, threw off for ever the yoke of Rome. This is

not the case, however. The great Reformation in the time of Knox was only a grand revival of the Presbyterian doctrine and government loved and practised by many in Scotland more than a thousand years before Knox electrified the people by his stirring appeals.

The Roman Catholic Church was not the first to bring the Gospel of Christ to these islands. It is generally accepted as a historical fact that the Apostle Paul preached the Gospel in Britain; and for centuries no one disputed the claim of the Culdees in Scotland to have received the Gospel from the Apostle John, if not in person, certainly by his writings. For centuries before the Christian era, vessels traded between Britain and the ports of Asia Minor. This circumstance is referred to by Herodotus, who wrote more than four centuries before Christ. During the lifetime of the Apostle John, who lived until the commencement of the second century, and during the second and third centuries, there was a considerable trade kept up between these islands and Asia Minor, Greece, and Alexandria. Among these traders there were earnest Christians, who had embraced the Gospel under the teaching of the apostles, and rejoiced to be heralds of the glad tidings to the people in this and other lands. History also records that British prisoners of war had learned to know Christ and His salvation during their captivity, and had brought back to their countrymen the knowledge of the Messiah. Fifty-five years before Christ, Julius Cæsar conquered a considerable portion of Britain, and

carried off hostages; and Britain remained under the Romans until 410 A.D. These islands, therefore, were well known and much frequented in these early ages. Tradition has it that one of the first converts to Christianity in Scotland was a prince named Lucius. Be that as it may, it is certain that while those who saw the Apostle John, and heard the Gospel from his lips, were still living, there were many Churches in the south and west of Scotland where Christ was preached and worshipped. This fact is attested by several early Christian writers. And, if further confirmation were necessary, we have it in the fact that the country was known as "The Isle of Saints."

Before the Reformation in the time of Knox, the Christian Church in Scotland passed through two great phases,—the first was the period of its formation and growth, the other the period of its corruption, through the influence of Rome and the popish hierarchy.

When the Roman armies invaded Britain, the Roman Empire was heathen and not Christian. It was not until the fourth century of the Christian era that the Emperor Constantine embraced the Christian religion, and established Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire (A.D. 323).

The first thing the British Christians received from Rome was bitter persecution. This drove the Christians in the south of the island to Scotland. They lived such holy, happy lives as to impress the

Scots with the reality and power of the religion of Christ. They at once abandoned their sacred oaks, and mysterious caverns, and blood-stained altars, and cordially embraced the Gospel. Thus Roman persecution, instead of stamping out Christianity in Britain, greatly increased the number of disciples. These events happened within less than two hundred years after the death of the Apostle John. These early Churches, therefore, were formed after the type of the Churches in Ephesus, and Corinth, and Alexandria, founded by the apostles, and consequently they had no connection with Rome; for the Roman Empire was still pagan, and persecuted the Christians everywhere. This accounts for the fact that these early Churches were Presbyterian, not only in doctrine, but in government and in simplicity of worship.

In the year 372 A.D. an event happened that had far-reaching consequences. On the banks of the Clyde, not far from Glasgow, in the little Christian village of Bonavern, now Kilpatrick, a little boy, whom his parents called Succat, was born. His father, Calpurnius, was a most pious man, and a deacon in the Christian Church at Bonavern. His mother, Conchessa, was a sister of the celebrated Martin, Archbishop of Tours. They carefully taught their boy the precious truths of the Gospel. One day, while he and his two little sisters were playing on the sea-shore, some Irish pirates carried them all off to their boats and sold them to a petty chieftain in

Ireland. While herding the swine in solitude, he meditated much upon the lessons his pious mother had taught him; and at the age of sixteen, after passing through a severe mental and spiritual struggle, he found peace and joy through believing in Jesus. "The Lord opened my eyes," he says, "and I was converted with my whole heart to the Lord my God. The love of God increased in me, with faith and holy fear. The Spirit urged me to such a degree that I poured forth as many as a hundred prayers a day."

Twice a captive and twice rescued, Succat, afterwards known as St. Patrick, felt an irresistible desire in his heart to carry the Gospel to Ireland, where he had first found Christ and the blessings of salvation. His parents endeavoured to turn his mind from his purpose, but he could not turn aside the call of God. It was a great struggle to leave his parents, but he overcame. "It was not done in my own strength," he says, "it was God who overcame all." He went to Ireland, not by way of Rome, as a Roman Catholic writer of the twelfth century asserts without a shadow of evidence, but direct to his work, commissioned by God alone. The people flocked to hear the simple preaching of the Gospel, and large numbers were converted to Christ. In a short time all Ireland was won over to Christianity.

In one of the Churches formed by St. Patrick there arose a man destined to do a great and good work. This was Columba, grandson of King Fergus. Although of royal blood, he resolved to devote his life to preach-

ing the Gospel of Christ. Feeling how much his native country owed to Scotland, he said, "I will go and preach the Gospel in Scotland." In company with several earnest Christians he set out in a small boat, and eventually landed on the island of Iona, in the year 565. Here he found a little colony of Christian Culdees, where they had sought refuge from persecution. Columba and his companions erected a small chapel, a portion of which still remains, being built into the walls of the large cathedral, which is now an interesting ruin.

Columba was filled with the missionary spirit of the Apostle Paul, and went from house to house, and from kingdom to kingdom, proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation. Presently he had the great gratification of seeing the king of the Picts embrace the religion of Christ, as well as very many of his people. A school of theology was founded at Iona for the training of missionary preachers. There was no sacerdotalism here, nor salvation by works. Columba taught that the Holy Spirit alone made a servant of God. When the youths of Caledonia assembled around these holy ministers, they were taught such truths as these: "The holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith." "Throw aside all merit of works and look for salvation to Christ alone." "Beware of a religion that consists of outward observances. It is better to keep the heart pure before God than to abstain from meats." "Christ alone is the Head of the Church." "Bishops and presbyters are one and the same. They

The Early Ages of Christianity in Scotland. 7

should be the husbands of one wife, and keep their children in subjection.”

The presbyters of Iona knew no such doctrines as transubstantiation, or confession to a priest, or purgatory, or prayers for the dead, or the celibacy of the clergy. They used no lighted candles or incense in their worship. The affairs of the Church were managed by a synod, and not by bishops or a pope. The government was purely Presbyterian. They celebrated Easter on a different day from the Church of Rome—that is, on the same day as the Eastern Churches—proving that Patrick and Columba had no intercourse with the Roman Catholic Church. The students were ordained for missionary work by the laying-on of hands of the presbyters. As in New Testament times, they were called either presbyters or bishops,—presbyters, or elders, in virtue of their office ; bishops, as having oversight of the flock. Here we have the Presbyterian form of government flourishing in Scotland one thousand years before it was restored by John Knox.

These holy men were so filled with missionary zeal that their religion soon spread over Great Britain, penetrating into Wales. Filled with holy zeal, they carried the Gospel even to the Continent. These missionary bishops, as they were called, found their way to France, and Holland, and Italy, and Switzerland, and Germany, carrying with them the pure Gospel of Jesus, without the corruptions of Rome. The Presbyterian, or New Testament form of government, was

everywhere established. Among the Waldenses, and in the valleys of Italy, the Church of Rome has never been able to root it up; so that there never was a time since the apostles when Christ was without faithful witnesses to the truth, apart altogether from the Romish Church; and there never was a time when Presbyterianism was stamped out. The historian, speaking of the missionary zeal that characterised these early Presbyterians, says, "We might almost imagine this unknown people to have been a new Israel, and Iona and Bangor to have inherited the virtues of Zion."

Columba by many writers has been placed in the first rank after the apostles, and he certainly infused the missionary spirit of the apostles into his followers. He lived moment by moment as in the very presence of God, redeeming the time. He prayed and read, wrote and taught, travelled and preached like another Paul. Publicly, and from house to house, he ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.

One point worthy of special notice with regard to these early Scottish Christians is, that there was not the slightest approach in their worship to sacerdotalism and ritualism. Where there is true spiritual life and fellowship with God, empty forms and ceremonies can never find a place. It is impossible to conceive of an earnest minister of the Gospel, intent upon leading souls to Christ and seeking to build them up in holiness, inviting the worshippers to look at lighted candles, and incense, and the attitudes of the minister, instead of pointing them to the Lamb of God who

taketh away the sin of the world. Where such meaningless rites are observed, there can be no real spiritual life. It was the intense earnestness of these early Scottish Christians that kept them pure in life and doctrine and worship. Men who keep up constant communion with Christ, by a living, ever-acting faith, will be guided aright, and they will not dare to put anything between anxious souls and their Saviour. The Presbyters of Iona were not trammelled by the State, and that gave them perfect freedom to teach and to preach according to the Word of God. Throughout the Roman Empire the Christian Church was a State institution since the year 323, when the Emperor Constantine embraced the Christian religion. The conversion of Constantine seemed at the time to be a great conquest for Christianity; but ultimately it proved to be a source of weakness. Christianity is strong only as the individuals who embrace it are strong; and individual Christians are strong only as they maintain fellowship with Christ, and lead pure, holy, consecrated lives. What a source of weakness it must have been to the Christian Church that the whole Roman Empire should have become nominally Christian in a day, without even hearing of God's way of peace through simple faith in Jesus! From this time the Roman legions went forth, conquering armies, and baptizing them on the battlefield. Thus was Roman Christianity corrupted at this early period.

The proud Anglo-Saxons in England, who came over

in 449, had persistently refused to receive the Gospel from the humble missionaries of Iona. Gregory I., now bishop of Rome,—not pope, or universal bishop, for there were no popes at this period,—in the year 596 laid a project for bringing Britain under his spiritual sway. The Roman occupation of Britain had ceased in the year 410, and the Saxon invaders held sway in the country. Hence Roman Christianity could not be forced upon the Saxons in England. The work had to be done by missionaries. So Gregory despatched a mission under Augustine—a name not to be confounded with that of the great theologian of the fourth century. This man believed that faith and holiness were less essential to the Church than authority and power; hence he made no attempt to win souls to Christ, but sought simply to enlist them under the sceptre of Rome. Worldliness, and ambition, and love of power, and greed of gain, were from this time dominant in the Church of Rome.

Augustine and his forty missionaries landed on the island of Thanet; and the king of Kent, from fear of magic, resolved to receive them in the open air. By an imposing procession, and chanting Latin hymns, they inspired sufficient confidence in Ethelbert to obtain his permission to celebrate their worship in an old chapel at Canterbury. Shortly after, the king and thousands of his subjects accepted certain Christian doctrines, together with the numerous errors of Rome, including the doctrine of purgatory. Thus the Anglo-Saxons became Roman Catholics. The Britons had

already been driven to Wales, and Cornwall, and Scotland by the Saxon invaders, and retained their pure Scriptural Christianity.

Augustine, now appointed Archbishop of the Saxon and British Church, sought to bring all the Christians in Britain under the jurisdiction of Rome. At this time, about the year 600, there was in Bangor, North Wales, a large Christian community of over three thousand, in addition to those in Scotland and other parts of the kingdom. Augustine proposed a conference, hoping to win them over by plausible words. However, they resolutely refused to acknowledge the superior claims of the Bishop of Rome, whom Augustine pompously styled "father of fathers." In the year 601 he called a general assembly of both British and Saxon bishops. In vain did the archbishop lavish arguments, and prayers, and censures. The Britons were firm, and would not yield. Some of them, who had eaten with the Saxons while they were heathens, now refused to do so, because they had submitted to Rome. Some of the Scotch bishops were particularly firm, and would not eat with the Saxons, not only at the same table, but not even under the same roof. Thus Augustine was foiled a second time, and the independence of the ancient British Church seemed secure.

Augustine called a third council, and again failed. Filled with rage, he exclaimed, "If you will not receive brethren who bring you peace, you shall receive enemies who shall bring you war. If you will not

unite with us in showing the Saxons the way of life, you shall receive from them the stroke of death." Argument had failed; now for the sword. That has been Rome's method from that day to this. She will not acknowledge defeat. What she cannot accomplish by fair means, she will attempt by foul means. So the archbishop incited Edelfrid, one of the Anglo-Saxon kings, to march on Bangor with a numerous army; and they massacred in cold blood 1250 men, unarmed, while kneeling in prayer, and destroyed the town. Thus by bloodshed and butchery did the Roman Catholic Church establish itself in Britain. And yet they claimed the exclusive right to bear the name of Christ. Alas that they should bear so little of His image! To be a Christian is to be like Christ, and to follow in His steps. But He refused to establish His kingdom by the sword. He came to bring peace to the earth, and not a sword. He came to save life, not to destroy it. Still, notwithstanding the stern and threatening attitude assumed by Rome, brave Scotland held out against the ruthless invader.

King Edwin, of Northumbria, the founder of Edinburgh, about the year 625, expelled the sons of a former king, Oswald and Oswy. They took refuge in Iona, and were brought up Christians. Oswald was truly converted, and was baptized into the Scottish Church. He loved to sit at the feet of the presbyters of Iona, and listen to their words. They told him of Jesus Christ going about from place to place doing good. They taught him that Christ was the only Head

of the Church ; and he promised never to acknowledge any other. He soon conceived the idea of converting Northumbria to Christ, as well as gaining the throne for himself. This he did in the year 634. At the head of a little band, few in number but strong in faith, he knelt in prayer on the battlefield, and rose to conquer. He drove out the enemy, and set up in Northumbria the Kingdom of Christ.

CHAPTER II.

COLUMBA TO WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

“Among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.”—PHIL. ii. 15.

IN the previous chapter we traced a pure Scriptural Christianity, not only outside of but utterly opposed to Rome and the papacy, down to the middle of the seventh century. The Britons in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the North of England, persistently refused to acknowledge the claims of the Roman Catholic Church, or to embrace her distinctive doctrines.

From the letters and hymns of St. Patrick, Columba, and others, we learn that they held and taught the fundamental evangelical doctrines of the Gospel in all their primitive purity and simplicity. The doctrine of the Trinity is clearly set forth in such hymns as:—

“We worship Thee, Almighty King;
To God, the Father, praise we bring;
To Jesus, Saviour of the lost,
And to the blessed Holy Ghost.”

This hymn, which belongs to the era of St. Patrick, gives a brief sketch of the life of Christ. The “Altus

Prosator" of Columba recognises the Trinity, and also the Divinity of Christ:—

"Great Father of all, the Almighty, we praise,
The One-unbegotten, the Ancient of Days,
Eternally first and eternally last,
With Thee there remains neither future nor past.

"With Thee, co-eternal in glory and might,
Reigns Christ on the throne in the regions of light,
Thine only-begotten, the Son of Thy love ;
And there, too, the Spirit, the heavenly dove.

"The judgments of heaven shall be scattered abroad
On all who deny that Jesus is God ;
But we shall be raised up with Jesus on high,
To where the new mansions all-glorious lie."

How beautifully we have here set forth the divinity of Christ. There were no Unitarians among those grand old fathers of Scottish and Irish Christianity. They had mind enough to grasp the idea of unity in trinity. A Three-one God was not a contradiction of terms in their eyes. Hence, with humble faith and reverent heart they sing:—

"O Unity in Trinity ! help, for in Thee I live !
O Trinity in Unity ! all my sins forgive !"

There was no unitarianism and no popery in their beliefs. They asked God, and not the priest, to forgive their sins:—

"O Trinity in Unity ! all my sins forgive !"

Their hymns and writings further show that they held the true doctrine of the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Christ, and His coming again in glory. They also taught the necessity

of the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit to make men sons of God and heirs of eternal blessedness. The perfect life was attained through fellowship with Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and not by fasting, and penance, and priestly absolution, and purgatory.

They held also that the Holy Scriptures were the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and doctrine. They rejected with indignant scorn all appeals to human tradition, and Catholic councils, and the authority of the Pope. Their motto was: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The distinctively Romish doctrines of human merit, through afflicting the body; of absolution, in which the priest declares the forgiveness of sin; of purgatory, a place where souls are supposed to be purified after death, by having masses said for them by the priests,—for which, of course, they are well paid,—found no place in their teaching, as they find no place in the Scriptures. Nor do we hear anything of the worship of saints, the worship of the Virgin Mary, transubstantiation, or the infallibility of Church councils—much less of the Pope. All these distinctive tenets of modern Romanism are never heard from the lips of these holy men, who went about like the apostles teaching and preaching Jesus Christ, and evangelising the world.

St. Bernard says that this ancient Church of the Scots "rejected auricular confession, as well as authori-

tative absolution, and confessed to God alone, believing that God only could forgive sin." Marriage was regarded as a civil rite, not as a sacrament, and consequently was performed by the magistracy. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that these Scotch and Irish Christians had no sympathy with Rome, but were utterly opposed to the doctrines and government of the Roman Catholic Church.

Although by means of plausible pretences and fawning flattery Rome succeeded in winning over kings and princes, and thus got a foothold in certain parts of Scotland and Ireland after the year 701, yet this free, pure, primitive Church held sway in the hearts of the Scotch and Irish people until the twelfth century. This Scriptural Church, evangelical and missionary, "contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," "holding forth the Word of Life in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," and carried the Gospel to nearly every country in Europe, and thus became the means of blessing to myriads of mankind.

The Anglo-Saxons, notwithstanding their aversion to the Britons, whom they had dispossessed two centuries before, as late as the year 660, were converted to the religion of the presbyters of Iona, the whole Saxon heptarchy, with the exception of Kent, having adopted the British Confession in preference to the Romish. The good work, commenced by Oswald, king of Northumbria, was vigorously prosecuted by the presbyters of Iona and missionaries

from Bangor, in Ireland; and in a short time pure religion had overspread nearly the whole kingdom, and the Roman Catholic Church was all but extinct in England.

The pious Oswald, who has left a name dear to British Christianity, fell in battle, exclaiming, "Lord, have mercy on the souls of my people." He was succeeded by his brother, Oswy, a most ambitious and unscrupulous man, who shrank from no crime that would increase his power. His wife had been brought up in the Romish communion; and, as a condition of the marriage, had a Roman Catholic priest as her chaplain. The king had no religious convictions, although brought up with his brother among the elders of Iona. For a time he outwardly adhered to the British Confession, while his wife observed the Romish ritual; and, following the rule of the Eastern Churches, he would be joyfully commemorating the resurrection of Christ with the British, while his wife would be keeping Palm Sunday with fasting and humiliation. After a time his crimes began to trouble him and prey upon his mind, especially the murder of his relative, Oswyn. And, having had no personal experience of the power of religion, and not knowing that Christ was the door and the only way to the Father, he sought among men a door-keeper who would open to him the kingdom of heaven. The representative of Rome claimed that the Roman Catholic Church was the Church of the Apostle Peter—a claim which is rather remarkable for a Church

that forbids her bishops and priests to marry, for Peter was certainly a married man. Still, they claim that Peter was the founder of the Church at Rome, and that the keys of the kingdom had been given to him, and transmitted through the bishops of Rome. The king asked the presbyters of Iona if it was true that Christ said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." They replied, "It is true." "Can you prove that similar powers were given to your Columba?" asked the king. They replied, "We cannot." So Oswy exclaimed, "Peter is the door-keeper. I will obey him, lest when I appear at the gate of heaven there shall be no one to open to me." He forgot that Christ had said, "I am the door. By Me if any one enter in, he shall go in and out and find pasture." "I am He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." He put Peter, the servant, in the place of Jesus, the Master. Thus, instructed by Rome, he yielded to the claims of the papacy. He stretched out his hands to Rome, and Rome riveted the chains upon him. He sought to enter heaven through Peter and the Church of Rome, instead of through the finished work of Christ; and it is pretty certain that he never got there—for Peter himself says of Jesus, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

Determined to uphold the doctrine of Christ in its purity, the presbyters of Iona withdrew from the

conference, refusing to bend beneath the yoke of Rome. Thirty Anglo-Saxon bishops also withdrew, and their hatred of popery became more intense than ever. Thus, in the year 664 the greater portion of England accepted the sway of Rome; but Scotland and Ireland still stood firm.

However, a final effort is made to win over the Scottish Christians. Alfred is now king of Northumbria. The senior presbyter of Iona is invited to the court. By pomp and presents and flattery they win over the vain old man. He goes back to Scotland to betray his Church; but the college of presbyters at Iona banished from their presence the renegade from the faith, and he was compelled to leave the country.

Failing with the presbyters of Scotland, Rome, nothing daunted by defeat, approaches the prince, Naitim, king of the Picts. Like Oswy of Northumbria, he was a vain and ambitious prince, fond of pomp and gorgeous display. So the priests of Rome, wise in their generation, approach the prince in a manner calculated to flatter his vanity. "The Roman Church," they said, "is a monarchy, and ought to be the church of every monarch. The Roman ceremonial corresponds with the pomp and splendour of royalty, and her temples are palaces, fit for kings to worship in." This last argument convinced the ambitious king. He asks to have an architect sent who will build a gorgeous church after the Roman pattern, of stone, not of wood. The church is built. The king assembles his nobles and the pastors of the Church, and thus addressed

them: "I recommend all the clergy of my kingdom to receive the tonsure of St. Peter." He sent agents to all the provinces to cause the clergy everywhere to receive the circular tonsure of Rome. A royal proclamation, and a few clips of the scissors on the crown of the head, in the year 710 placed a large number of the Scotch clergy under the authority of Rome. That is Rome's way of converting the world. Not a word about doctrine, not a word about Christ, not a word about pardon and a holy life; simply a gorgeous church for the king to worship in with pomp and splendour, and a shaved crown for the clergy. That is the way to enter into life! Give a contribution to build a splendid cathedral for your monarch, and outwardly connect yourself with the Church of Rome, and wear her habiliments, and you are a Christian! Such was the stream that flowed from the fountain-head of Rome one thousand years ago, when she was only half-way along her path of corruption. The Lord Jesus said to weary, struggling souls, burdened with the weight of sin, and longing for peace and fellowship with God, "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest." "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." But Rome says, "Come into the Roman Catholic Church. He that hath communion with Rome hath life, and he that hath not communion with Rome let him be accursed." Submission to a church built, not upon Christ, not even upon Peter, but upon human tradition and the decisions of fallible councils, that is what

Rome asks of her converts. But against all this the faithful in Scotland placed Christ and the Word of God: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Notwithstanding the defection of the prince and a portion of the clergy, still very many, both in Scotland and in Ireland, held out for centuries, and refused to bow to the rule of Rome. In Scotland, a pure Church, owing no allegiance to pope or prince, and unfettered by State control, existed until the time of King David, known as the "Sair Saint," in 1124.

During much of these early centuries all Scotland was aglow with Gospel life. The earnest Christian men of those early days carried the Gospel of Christ with living, converting power into every village and nook of the Highlands, and into every island of the Hebrides, and also became missionaries to nearly every nation in Europe. All honour to these brave devoted men, who dared dangers and defied popes and princes that they might hold forth the Word of Life, and preserve to posterity and preach to the world a pure Gospel, whose power and preciousness they themselves had felt and proved.

The same is true of Ireland during the same period. For eight hundred years after the birth of St. Patrick a powerful, free Christian Church existed in Ireland, only a single province having previously yielded to Rome. In the year 1155, Pope Adrian IV., the only Englishman who ever sat in the pontifical chair at Rome, issued a bull giving the kingdom of Ireland

to Henry II. of England, assigning as his reason, that the Irish were "very bad Christians" and "schismatics,"—that is, they persisted in refusing to acknowledge the rule of Rome. And, as the pope could get nothing from these shrewd Irish Christians, he made a present of the whole island to the king of England, in order that he might make good Catholics of the people, or, in other words, compel them to pay tithes to the pope. The pope, then, in his pride and arrogance, claimed the right to dispose of all Christian lands according to his pleasure. The ambitious Henry was only too glad to receive from the pope what was not the pope's to give; and thus Ireland became annexed to the English crown. We find many Irishmen in our day, ignorant of the history of their country, blaming England for seizing Ireland, whereas it was the pope who sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. So it has always been with the papacy. The pope lays absolute claim to the property and bodies—ay, and the souls, too—of all who acknowledge his rule. The one aim of the papacy is to get, not to give; and, excelling all other traffickers in goods, they do not scruple to make money out of the souls of the deceased, keeping them in the torments of purgatorial fire until immense sums of money are extracted from simple-minded, but, alas! deluded friends. Hence for money—the tithes and first-fruits—Ireland was sold by the pope to Henry II. of England.

O'Driscoll, an honest, well-informed Roman Catholic writer, says of this period: "There is something very

singular in the ecclesiastical history of Ireland. The Christian Church of that country, as founded by St. Patrick and his predecessors, existed for many ages free and unshackled. For above seven hundred years this Church maintained its independence. It had no connection with England, and differed in many points of importance from Rome. The work of Henry II. was to reduce the Church of Ireland into obedience to the Roman pontiff. Accordingly he procured a council of the Irish clergy held at Cashel in 1172, and the combined influence of Henry and the pope prevailed. This council put an end to the ancient Church of Ireland, and submitted it to the yoke of Rome. That apostasy has been followed by a series of calamities hardly to be equalled in the world. From the days of St. Patrick to the Council of Cashel in 1172 was a bright and glorious era for Ireland. From the sitting of this council to our time the lot of Ireland has been unmingled evil, and all her history a tale of woe." Such is the unbiassed testimony of an honest Roman Catholic, who looks at history in the light of actual facts.

We thus find that up to the middle of the twelfth century a pure, Scriptural Church, independent of Rome, flourishing in both Scotland and Ireland. But now darker days are in store for these noble churches which did so much to evangelize Europe.

On the marriage of Malcolm with the English Roman Catholic Princess Margaret, Rome began for the first time to make a permanent impression upon

the Scottish people. This Saxon queen completed the outward perversion of Scotland to Romanism. She summoned a council of the clergy in 1074, under the pretence of introducing reforms. The Gaelic language was the only language the clergy could speak, although they had a professional knowledge of Latin. The king had to act as interpreter between the queen and the clergy. The queen, however, failed to convince the ministers. They declined to acknowledge the supremacy of the pope. Thus it appears that although the court was Roman Catholic, and although the Romish religion was from this time nominally the religion of Scotland, yet the old religion continued to live in the hearts of the people.

In the meantime William of Normandy had conquered the Saxons in England having defeated them at Hastings in 1066—eight years before Margaret began her work of reducing Scotland to the pope of Rome. During William's reign we have the first step towards Protestantism in England. The four advancing steps are: William of Normandy—Wycliffe—Edward III.—and the Reformation in the time of John Knox. By Protestantism, we mean the protest against the corruptions of the Roman Catholic Church in favour of a pure Scriptural religion, such as had flourished in Scotland and Ireland for eight centuries previous to this time.

In 1124 David, who was educated in England, ascended the throne of Scotland. His court was filled with Norman and English gentry. The Celtic

chiefs were pushed aside to make room for English barons. Thus the Romish religion was strengthened in Scotland. With the decay of the power of the Celtic chiefs the Scottish Church, as a Church, also passed away, four centuries before the great reformer, John Knox, appeared upon the scene. And yet there were many faithful men in the west and north of Scotland who held firm to the pure religion of their fathers. The bulk of Bruce's army, who fought and conquered at Bannockburn in 1314, were descendants, lineally and religiously, of the ancient Scottish Church. Retaining the piety and simplicity of worship of their forefathers, we find them kneeling in prayer on the battle-field; and, strong in the strength of the God of battles, they rise to conquer. They were men of faith and prayer. Their religion was a reality; not a mere outward form, but a thing of the heart and life. They felt that God was near, a present help in every time of need. The reality of their faith, as seen on the battle-field, astonished the English Catholics, whose religion consisted of mere external rites and ceremonies; and before the day was done the strength of their arm astonished them more. Thus it will be seen that the torch of true religion, extinguished on the throne and at the court of Scotland, still continued to burn brightly in many faithful hearts on Caledonia's heathery hills.

CHAPTER III.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR TO WYCLIFFE.

“Christ is the Head of the Church.”—EPH. v. 23.

IN the preceding chapters we have traced a pure evangelical Scriptural Christianity in Scotland and Ireland, and in parts of England, down to the middle of the twelfth century, outside of and opposed to Rome. And even after that date we saw that the heroes of Bannockburn, in the year 1314, led to glory and to victory by Robert the Bruce, were true descendants of the Free Christian Church so long upheld in Scotland by their forefathers. It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that the true light of Christianity was ever quenched in Great Britain in these early centuries, or that Rome ever held undisputed sway in this country. Much less is Great Britain indebted to Rome for the light of the Gospel. Noble men of God all adown the centuries held forth the Word of Life in spite of the efforts of Rome to stamp out the pure religion of Christ.

While the ancient Church of Ireland and Scotland was still strong in the hearts of the people, William

the Conqueror, having conquered the Saxons in England in 1066, threw off the yoke of Rome. No sooner had the foot of the Conqueror touched the soil of Great Britain than he seemed to be inspired with the idea of religious liberty, for which the British Church had contended for centuries. He determined to allow no prince or prelate to possess in his dominions any power or jurisdiction independent of his own. The papacy unwittingly furnished him with weapons to accomplish his purpose. The Roman legate pressed the king to dismiss the English bishops in a body. The bishops, finding that they must choose between the king and the pope, at once sided with William. The Archbishop of Canterbury refused to go to Rome at the command of the pope, and set himself to carry out the designs of the king. William opposed the supremacy of the sword to the supremacy of the pope, and declined to allow the pope to interfere in any way with the affairs of his kingdom. Hildebrand, one of the greatest and best of the popes, now filled the chair of St. Peter. Hildebrand was mighty in the Church, mighty in diplomacy; and William was mighty in war and mighty in will. And the mail-clad hand of the Conqueror proved to be too strong for the mightiest and proudest of Roman pontiffs. The pope claimed the right to all ecclesiastical appointments throughout Christendom. William, however, would not allow him to interfere in England. The pope submitted, as it was a matter of temporalities. Then Hildebrand, wishing to enslave the clergy, issued a

bull depriving the priests of their lawful wives. William got a decree passed by the Council of Winchester in 1076, declaring that married priests should not put away their wives, thus defying the pope. The pope at once summoned the archbishop to Rome; William forbade him to go. Hildebrand exclaimed, "Never did king, not even pagan, attempt against the holy see what this man does not scruple to carry out." The pope demanded an oath of fidelity. William refused the homage. He even went so far as to forbid the clergy to recognise the pope, or to publish any of the pope's bulls without the approval of the king in council.

William the Conqueror was succeeded by his son, William Rufus. He went even further than his father in opposition to Rome, and for ten years did without a pope, or archbishop, or bishops, and squandered the revenues of the Church. This imprudence on the part of the king brought about a reaction in favour of authority in Church matters being vested in the pope. It was a choice between the yoke of royalty and the yoke of Rome. How slow were men, then as now, to see that no Church can be truly free that is in bondage to any man, be he pope or king, who claims to take Christ's place as the Head of the Church. "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren," said the Lord Himself. Christ is the only King and Head of the Church. This must ever be a fundamental principle in any true Scriptural Church. It can never be departed from without danger and

disaster. No prince, or prelate, or pope can be recognised as Head of the Church without dishonouring Christ and denying His right to rule. What every true Protestant, and what every true Christian claims, is not the supremacy of the king as opposed to the supremacy of the pope, but the sole supremacy of Christ in His Church. We, therefore, direct attention to the supremacy of the Conqueror in the Church, not by way of approval, but simply as an historical fact, to prove that the power and authority of Rome were not acknowledged in England, when there was a ruler strong enough to assert his rights and maintain religious liberty.

From this time to the time of Henry VIII. the struggle goes on between the supremacy of the king and the supremacy of the pope; while here and there throughout the kingdom a few faithful men bravely contend for the sole supremacy of Christ and the Holy Scriptures.

Clement, a pious and learned doctor of the Scottish Church, gifted with wonderful power of discernment, declared that the authority of man, substituted for the authority of Christ, was the source of all the errors of the Roman Catholic Church. He was a man of firm faith and holy, devoted life, and deeply imbued with a missionary spirit. During his missionary labours among the Franks and Germans he encountered Boniface, a fanatical champion of Rome, who preached the doctrine of tithes and the supremacy of the pope. Boniface confronted the Scotch divine with the laws

and canons of the Romish Church. Clement replied by denying their authority, and refuted them from the Word of God. Boniface appealed to the decisions of Church councils. Clement replied, "If the decisions of councils are contrary to Holy Scripture, they have no authority over Christians." Boniface then appealed to the writings of the illustrious fathers of the Latin Church, quoting Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory, of the fourth and fifth centuries; but Clement rejected all authority except the Word of God alone. Boniface then appealed to the whole Catholic Church, which, by its priests and bishops united to the pope, forms, as he claimed, an invincible unity. But Clement excluded all, except so far as they taught according to the Word of God; and boldly declared that the true Church was found only among those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. Thus we see that the grand principles of the Reformation were earnestly upheld by able men centuries before Luther, and Calvin, and Knox appeared on the scene. Throughout all the centuries there were found faithful men, earnest and bold in advocating the supremacy of Christ and the Word of God.

During the last years of the eleventh century, William Rufus was seized with a dangerous malady, and under the influence of remorse consented to receive an archbishop from the pope. This was Anselm, a great theologian. Taking advantage of the circumstances which led to his appointment, he succeeded in setting the Church free from the yoke of royalty, but

only to bring it under heavier bondage to the yoke of Rome. He was succeeded in the archbishop's seat by Thomas à Becket, The work of binding England to Rome, commenced by a great theologian, was to be carried out by a great worldling. He soon became the champion of the priests in their crimes, although he affected to be a great saint. He actually took under his protection a priest, who added to the crime of seduction the murder of his victim's father.

Henry II. was now king; and, it being represented to him that no less than one hundred murders had been committed by priests and prelates during the first ten years of his reign, he summoned a council in 1164, which drew up a code of regulations limiting the power of the clergy. The archbishop signed the code under strong pressure from the king; but the pope at once released him from his oath. From this time there began a fierce and long struggle between the king and the representative of the pope. The king and the archbishop mutually defied each other. À Becket threatened to excommunicate Henry, and Henry banished À Becket from his realm. Thus we see that Rome as late as the year 1170 had but a fitful foothold in England.

Henry one day, worried almost to death by the intrigues of the primate and the pope, exclaimed in haste in the presence of his courtiers, "Would to God some one would rid me of À Becket!" Four knights catching up these hasty words and misinterpreting them, crossed over from France and cruelly put the

archbishop to death. Henry was terribly grieved on account of their rash crime, and as a penance yielded all the pope's demands, and voluntarily submitted to be scourged. Thus England was again surrendered to the pope. The pope in return gave Henry Plantagenet authority to annex Ireland, on condition that he should collect the tithes and first-fruits for the pope.

However, in all these changes it must be remembered that the papacy got no real hold of the people. It was simply a matter of arrangement between the pope and the king. It is a most remarkable fact, that the Roman Catholic Church has never been able to convert nations by moral power. She either conquered them and called them Catholic, willing or unwilling; or else by diplomacy and intrigue she has won over kings and princes, and then claimed the people. In England, as in Scotland and in Ireland, the people during these centuries were never Roman Catholic by conviction. When religious life was at a low ebb the papacy was endured; but, whenever there was a revival of personal religion, thousands were found ready to protest against the assumptions and corruptions of Rome. The Romish Church knows nothing of a true missionary spirit—that is, to lead sinners one by one to personal faith in the personal Saviour. Henry II., following in the footsteps of William the Conqueror, protests against the authority of the pope, and England is Protestant. Again, in a moment of remorse, he accepts the rule of the pope, and England is declared Catholic. Yet England underwent no

change. No man in the kingdom had changed his opinions. What a fiasco! And yet it was quite satisfactory to the Roman pontiff. He received tithes and Peter's pence to fill his treasury, and what pope ever wanted anything more!

Henry II. was succeeded by his son Richard in 1189. He spent the ten years of his reign in wars on the Continent and crusades to the Holy Land. He had no time to devote to pope or prelates; hence in ecclesiastical affairs his reign is a blank. He was succeeded by his brother John in 1199.

Under this weak and foolish king, England was on the verge of becoming Mohammedan, in the same way that she had at previous periods become Roman Catholic. John refused to acknowledge the archbishop nominated by Pope Innocent III., the most powerful pope that ever filled the pontifical chair. However, a very strong pope proved to be more than a match for a very weak king. Innocent, determined to carry his point, laid England under an interdict, thereby excommunicating the king, and forbidding all worship and burial services for the dead until such time as the king should yield. That has always been the method adopted by Rome. Weak popes use only policy and diplomacy; strong popes have resort to force. In this emergency John made what show of resistance he could, and ordered all prelates and monks to leave the country. At the same time, he sent an ambassador to the king of Spain, offering to turn Mahomedan, and asked his protection. But

Philip Augustus, taking advantage of his extremity, was preparing to dethrone John and take the kingdom for himself. John, therefore, choosing, as he thought, the least of two evils, made up his mind to become a vassal of the pope, and yielded up his crown and kingdom in the year 1213.

This daring act of the pope in claiming the kingdom, and the weakness of the king in complying with his demand, roused the English nation to strike for liberty. The Magna Charta was drawn up—that great charter of civil and religious liberty—claiming the rights of the people against both pope and king. Forty-five barons, surrounded by their knights, and servants, and soldiers, compelled the king to sign it, thus laying the foundation of that liberty which has been so dear to Britons in all ages. This was Protestantism in a new aspect. It was not the resistance of an ambitious king merely; it was the heart of the nation demanding civil and religious liberty, and determined to have it. Innocent swore, as was his custom, at the conduct of the barons; swore, and still was “Innocent”—in name, if not in nature. Popes can swear profanely, although Christ said, “Swear not at all.” To swear profanely is disobedience to Christ, and, therefore, a sin. But it would be a poor thing if the pope, who claims power to forgive all sins, had not power to forgive himself. So he swears and forgives himself. In the same way, I presume, Sergius III. and the three Johns, X., XI., and XII., who, on the admission of Roman Catholic

historians, were notoriously immoral men, dispensed pardon to themselves. Innocent soon found that he had gone too far—that he had committed a very serious blunder in stirring up the opposition of the English nation. That happened, however, before popes were infallible. They make no mistakes now! They always speak the right word at the right time! And, of course, a wrong act becomes right by their doing it! What a progressive age is ours—development, progress everywhere! The present pope of Rome and his predecessors since 1870 have far outstripped even the Apostle Peter. No sooner had Peter received the keys of the kingdom than he spoke the wrong word, and even rebuked his Master; and Christ had to say to him, “Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savour’st not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.” And on another occasion he does the wrong thing, and denies his Lord. But modern popes never err! If Romish doctrine and dogma be true, we have here a most marvellous instance of development. Poor Peter must have been a very long way behind the present occupier of his chair at Rome. Nobody has ever thought of proclaiming the infallibility of St. Peter.

Innocent swore and declared the great charter null and void; forbade the king to observe the agreement he had signed; declared the conduct of the barons to be the work of the devil; and ordered them to make an apology. This is the way the papacy wel-

came the first dawning of manly liberty among the nations.

To this struggle we owe our free institutions and government by the representatives of the people. The struggle was short but decisive. The pope thundered, but the barons would not yield. John was supplied with an army to subdue them to the pope. Yes; the fire and the sword are always the last arguments with Rome. Blood-stained assassins scoured the country during the night, with the flaming faggot in one hand and the sword in the other; murdering barons, dishonouring their wives and daughters, all under the approval and benediction of the pope.

The heart of England was not Roman Catholic at this time. John could find no soldiers at home to fight for the supremacy of the pope. They had to be sent from abroad. While engaged in this murderous work, as the royal waggons were crossing the sands of the Wash, the tide suddenly rushed in and carried off all, both men and horses. The king regarded this startling calamity as a direct judgment from heaven; and, filled with dread and dismay, fled to a convent, drank himself drunk with cider, and died in a drunken debauch. Such was the miserable end of a king, despised during his life and abhorred in his death. God, however, is able to bring good out of evil. From this vile reign England dates her love of liberty, her free institutions, and her dread of popery.

Twenty years after the signing of Magna Charta, Robert Grosstête, Bishop of Lincoln, sounded the note

of reform and defiance of the pope in the Church, as the barons and nobility had done in the State. He publicly declared that, "To follow a pope who rebels against the will of Christ, is to separate from Christ and His body, the Church; and if ever the time should come when all men follow an erring pope, then will be the great apostasy, and all true Christians will refuse to obey." Thus in the year 1235, this great and good man predicted the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Pope Innocent commanded him to appoint his infant nephew a canon in Lincoln Cathedral. He nobly replied, "Although the chief of the angels should order me to commit such a sin, I would refuse. My obedience to God forbids me to obey, therefore I rebel." These brave and manly words embodied the principles of the Reformation. It was putting God and his Word above the pope.

Sewal, Archbishop of York, took the same noble stand; and "the more the pope cursed him, the more the people blessed him." He wrote to the pope, "Moderate your tyranny; for the Lord said to Peter, 'Feed my sheep'—not fleece them, flay them, and devour them."

England now grew in greatness as she grew in her opposition to the pope. Religious liberty and civil power marched on hand in hand. A king of France led captive to London; Spain and Italy compelled to acknowledge British valour; Edward III. conqueror over the French at Creey, in 1346, and at Poitiers, in 1356—England could not long acknowledge a

foreign despot in the pope. England was Catholic only in her times of weakness. In the days of her valour and vigour she always shook off the shackles of Rome. The opposition to the papacy was so strong during the first half of the fourteenth century, that an Englishman was condemned as a traitor and banished, for having brought to London a bull of excommunication issued by the pope.

Bradwardine, chaplain to Edward III., was one of the most pious men of his time, and the victories of his monarch were ascribed to his prayers. He lectured at Merton College, Oxford, on the sufficiency of Scripture, rejecting tradition and all Romish ceremonies and superstitions.

Edward III., in 1350, passed, by consent of Parliament, the Statute of Provisors, which made void every appointment of the pope, without election by the chapters and the approval of the patron and the king. This bold step alarmed the pope. He became submissive, and contented himself with simply confirming all appointments made by the king and Parliament. When asked by one of his cardinals why he yielded, he replied, "If Edward had appointed an ass, I would have accepted him." Edward III. was too strong a man for the pope to wrestle with; so he prudently withdrew from the ring, and allowed the king to have his own way.

Romanism had spent its force in England. It still stood for a time, like an old blasted tree of the forest, dead, but still standing because the root had sunk

deep in the soil. William the Conqueror and Edward III. stripped off every leaf and branch of this wide-spread upas tree. It remained for a later age to pull it up by the roots.

During the half-century from 1343 to 1393, under Edward III. and Richard II., most stringent laws were passed, which forbade all interference of the pope, all appeals to the court at Rome, all bulls from the pope, all excommunications, &c., declaring that whoever should bring such documents into England, or receive them, or publish them, should by that act put himself out of the King's protection and forfeit all his property. Such was the relation of England to the Romish see during the latter half of the fourteenth century.

Edward III. and the pious Bradwardine had prepared the way for Wycliffe, the Morning Star of the Reformation, who now appears upon the scene.

This brief sketch of the noble work of these early pioneers will suffice to prove that the English Reformation did not commence with Henry VIII., as many unacquainted with ecclesiastical history suppose. Then the Church of England in its Episcopal form had its origin. But Protestantism had existed in the hearts of the people all adown the centuries.

CHAPTER IV.

WYCLIFFE—THE MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION.

“We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.”
—2 Pet. i. 19.

DURING the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the ecclesiastical atmosphere was full of the spirit of reform. The seed sown centuries before by Scotch and Irish missionaries from the ancient British Church, was now bearing fruit on the Continent. As the corruptions and pretensions of Rome increased, earnest men began to recognise more fully the pressing necessity for adhering to a pure Scriptural form of worship, as opposed to outward show and ceremonial; and of asserting the supremacy of Christ and the Scriptures, as opposed to the authority of the pope, and the decisions of church councils. This longing for reformation found exponents in England, in Grostête, Bradwardine, and Wycliffe; in Bohemia, in John Huss and his followers; in France, in the Bishop of Cambray, Gerson, and Louis d’Allemand, Archbishop of Arles. Louis d’Allemand

was deposed and excommunicated by one pope (Eugene IV.); restored by another (Nicholas V.); and canonised as a saint by a third (Clement VII.).

Germany and Italy also had their reformers declaring against the corruptions of the Church and the vices of the clergy. And for centuries the Waldenses and Albigenses in the valleys of Switzerland and Italy, and in France, preserved a reformed church outside of Rome.

While the theologians of France and Germany were attacking the more glaring corruptions of the Romish Church, a deeper work was going on in England and Bohemia. In these countries earnest men were not satisfied with the correction of outward abuses. They were convinced that the Church had moved away from its true basis; and they began to assert not only the right of private judgment, but, what was of infinitely more importance, the supremacy of Christ and the Holy Scriptures.

It was the assertion of the supremacy of the Word of God, and the necessity of personal faith in the crucified Saviour as the only ground of pardon and salvation, that won for Wycliffe the proud title of "The Morning Star of the Reformation." The assertion of the same grand truths had also made Huss famous in Bohemia. They had anticipated Luther, and Calvin, and Knox, in proclaiming that there could be no genuine and satisfactory reformation of the Church, except the doctrine of justification by faith was again set up as a corner-stone in the Church.

Wycliffe and Huss found this cardinal doctrine where Luther found it—in the Word of God.

In Holland also several reformers appeared, three of whom completed their work and passed away within a few years of the birth of Luther—from 1475 to 1489. Of the accomplished and devoted Wessel, Luther said: "If I had read Wessel before I began, my opponents would have imagined that Luther had derived everything from Wessel, so entirely do we agree in spirit."

Italy, too, had at this time a distinguished reformer. While Luther was in his infancy, Savonarola was boldly preaching a pure Gospel in Florence. From Scripture and the writings of St. Augustine he had learned the precious truths of the Gospel. His powerful oratory and his fearless attacks upon the vices of the clergy and the princes, as well as of the people, attracted immense crowds to hear him. He had a thorough knowledge of the way of salvation, and pressed men's consciences so closely, that many an obstinate sinner was arrested and accepted Christ through his earnest faithful ministry. He created an immense sensation in Florence, and soon became the idol of the people. However, an end was put to his noble work by an ignoble pope, who would not look quietly on while souls were being saved by Christ, and sin was forgiven, and the life renewed, through simple faith in the sinner's Saviour, without the intervention of priest or pope. So Pope Alexander VI. hurled his anathema against the holy reformer, and he was con-

demned to the stake in 1498 as a heretic and a seducer of the people. Among the heresies laid to his charge was that of having taught the people the doctrine of justification by faith. This was twenty years before Luther published his famous theses. Everywhere, therefore, the breath of reformation was in the air during the latter part of the fifteenth century. England, however, was leading in the van, with Bohemia closely following. John Wycliffe and John Huss preceded these other reformers by more than half-a-century.

Wycliffe was born in a little village in Yorkshire in the year 1324. He studied at Oxford under the pious Bradwardine, and greatly distinguished himself as a student in the University. His high attainments soon procured his promotion. In 1348, when he was twenty-four years of age, a terrible plague appeared in England, after having carried off one-half of the inhabitants of Europe and Asia. This visitation of God filled him with alarm, for as yet he had not found the way of peace. He spent his days and nights in crying for mercy, and pleading with God to lead him into light and liberty. Through the study of the Scriptures he soon found Christ to be the satisfaction of his soul, and from that moment he resolved to make known the way of life to others.

In 1360 he was elected warden of Balliol College, and, in a few years, of Canterbury College also. Thus he had abundant opportunities of preaching the doctrine of faith which had already lighted up his own soul.

A profound scholar, an eloquent and fearless preacher, and, what was even more rare amongst the corrupt clergy of that time, of unblemished life, he began to wield tremendous influence over the people. He publicly accused the clergy of having cast aside the Word of God, and demanded that it should be restored to its rightful place and authority in the teaching of the Church.

Wycliffe was not only a devoted Christian, but an able and astute politician as well; and hence he maintained the right of the Crown against the assumptions of the papal hierarchy. By his powerful arguments he enlightened and moved the members of Parliament as well as the common people. His irresistible arguments were reproduced in the House of Lords. "Tribute is due," said one, "only to him who can grant protection." "England belongs not to the pope," said another. "The pope is but a man subject to sin; but Christ is the Lord of lords, and this kingdom is held solely and directly of Christ alone." "Why," said a third, "was this tribute originally demanded? Simply and solely to pay the pope for absolving John. It is therefore mere simony, a kind of clerical swindling, which the Lords spiritual and temporal are bound to oppose."

Animated and inspired by such manly counsels, Parliament decided unanimously that no prince had a right to alienate the sovereignty of the kingdom to any foreign prelate without the consent of the Lords and Commons. Hence, John's action in yielding up

the kingdom was illegal and unconstitutional ; and if the pope should take proceedings against the king as his vassal, then the nation should rise as one man to assert and maintain the independence of the Crown. No wonder the avarice and greed of the Roman pontiff had provoked such a storm of opposition, for the taxes paid to the pope amounted to five times the proceeds of all the revenues paid to the Crown ; and ecclesiastical benefices were either sold or given to foreign prelates, who spent their large revenues abroad, and who did not even keep the churches at home in decent repair.

Edward III. made Wycliffe one of his chaplains ; and never after did the pope dare to lay claim to the sovereignty of England. Although the pope from this time lost all temporal power in England, he nevertheless strove hard to maintain supremacy and authority in all ecclesiastical matters. Hence, a compromise was arranged at a conference in 1375. However, the Parliament of Edward III. was in no mood to make any compromises with the pope, and refused to confirm it. The Commons said, "The priests sent from Rome are more dangerous to the kingdom than Jews and Saracens. Every papal agent resident in England, and every Englishman living at the court of Rome, ought to be punished with death." Thus spoke the patriotic men who formed the Good Parliament. In the fourteenth century the nation called a Parliament "good" that resisted the claims of the papacy. Hence we see that both the Parliament and the nation

were thoroughly Protestant in sentiment more than a hundred and fifty years before the Protestantism of Henry the Eighth.

Wycliffe now publicly attacked the claims of the pope, declaring that the two rival popes at Rome and Avignon made *one* antichrist. He exposed the vices and follies of monastic orders in such a vivid manner as to endanger their very existence in the country. These unsparing attacks upon the cherished institutions of Rome, brought down upon him several papal bulls denouncing him as a heretic. But Wycliffe had too many friends at court and at the University, and in Parliament, to be affected by the ravings of the pope.

In 1381 a wonderful change came over the reformer, especially in reference to his methods of work. He now eagerly seeks to extend the Kingdom of Christ in the hearts of the people, leaving to others the defence of the kingdom of England. He became possessed with the idea of carrying a pure Gospel to every hamlet and town in England. "If begging friars," he said, "go throughout the country reciting the legends of saints and the history of the Trojan war, we must do for God's glory and the salvation of souls what they do to fill their wallets." So he instituted an itinerant ministry. Addressing the most pious and most gifted of his disciples, he said, "Go, and preach the Gospel of Christ to the people. It is the noblest work to which you can be called. But do not imitate the priests, whom we see, after the

sermon, sitting in the ale-houses, or at the gambling-table, or wasting their time in hunting. After your sermon visit the sick, and the aged, and the needy, and help them according to your ability." Those "poor priests," as they were called, set out like the early disciples of Christ, without purse, or scrip, or two coats, living by the kindness of friends among whom they laboured. The people gathered around them in crowds, hungry for the Bread of Life, and charmed by their simple natural eloquence and earnestness, and many were converted to Christ through their ministry.

But the papacy cannot look on unconcerned while souls are being converted to Christ, knowing that to be converted to Christ is to be converted from the pope. Courtenay, a bitter enemy of Wycliffe, is now archbishop; and a law is passed commanding every king's officer to commit the preachers and their followers to prison. Edward III. was now dead, after a glorious reign of fifty years, and his grandson, Richard II., a boy of eleven years, succeeded to the throne.

In 1379, while Wycliffe was laboriously discharging his duties as professor of divinity at Oxford, and was incessant in labour, preaching and teaching the people, he took suddenly and dangerously ill. The priestly party were jubilant. Death will silence the bold preacher whom papal bulls could not alarm. All that is wanted now to complete their triumph is that he should be prevailed upon to recant and dis-

avow his teaching the Scriptures to the common people, and his opposition to the papal see. Four regents representing the four religious orders, and four aldermen, came to his bedside, and hoped to frighten him into submission to Rome by threatening him with the vengeance of the Almighty. They said, "You have death staring you in the face, repent of your errors, and retract in our presence all you have said and done to the injury of the Church." Wycliffe in his weakness remained silent for a few minutes, no doubt looking to God in prayer for strength and wisdom to speak the right words. Feeble and worn, he was raised up and supported on his couch; and, fixing his eagle-eye upon the friars, like a thunderbolt from heaven his words fell upon their astonished ears, "I shall not die, but live, and again proclaim the evil deeds of the friars." Thus, like another Elijah, he puts to confusion the priests of Baal.

The reformer rose up from his bed, as he had predicted, to complete his work, and to publish the most important of his books against the pope and his clergy. He now advances in his attack upon Rome. No longer satisfied with exposing the arrogant claims of the pope and the vices of the clergy, he boldly attacks the corrupted doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. His first attack is made upon the doctrine of transubstantiation, which affirms that the wafer, when consecrated by the priest, becomes the very body of Christ, and is very God. Wycliffe taught his students that "the host is the body of Christ only in

a spiritual and figurative sense. The consecrated wafer which we see on the altar is not Christ or any part of Him, but simply His efficient sign or memorial." He denied the efficacy of the mass offered by the priest, because it was substituted for the sacrifice of the cross offered by Jesus Christ. He rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, because by asserting the presence of Christ in the consecrated wafer, and in it alone, it denied the presence of Christ by His Spirit in the hearts of believers. This false and pernicious doctrine has been a most powerful engine in the Roman Catholic Church. It is this: He who receives the wafer at the hand of a priest receives Christ and is saved; and he who does not receive it has no Christ, and is damned eternally. It is the old claim that there is no salvation outside the pale of the Roman Catholic Church. There is not one Roman Catholic priest to-day who will admit that any man can be saved by Christ without the help of a priest and the rites of the Roman Catholic Church.

They cannot, however, save their own best people, not even a pope. They can only send them to purgatory; and there they must remain until sufficient prayers are said for the repose of their soul; or, what is the same thing, until they can extort no more money from poor, deluded, superstitious relatives. Of all forms of blasphemy this is the grossest. It denies that Christ is the Saviour of those who put their trust in Him; and that is certainly speaking falsely of Christ, for He Himself has said, "He that believeth

on the Son hath everlasting life." How, it might be asked, were people saved before there was any Roman Catholic Church to say prayers for their souls, and to give them the body of Christ in the consecrated wafer, and extreme unction and absolution in the article of death? What of Enoch and Elijah, taken direct to heaven? Did they never arrive because there was no purgatorial fire to purify them? What of Abraham, and Moses, and Samuel, and David, and John the Baptist? There was no consecrated wafer then to be the vehicle of bringing Christ into them, for the Lord's Supper had not been instituted. There was no way for them to receive Christ but by faith, and the personal indwelling of His Spirit. Who gave extreme unction—the last anointing—to Peter and Paul, and other apostles who suffered martyrdom? There was no priest present at their death! John got a very liberal anointing when he was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, but that was not bestowed by a priest; and one would think that of all the apostles he who received the most needed it the least. Is it any wonder, then, that a system so dishonouring to Christ, so destructive to deluded souls, so contrary to Scripture and reason and common-sense, should stir to their deepest depths the souls of such earnest and devout theologians as Wycliffe, and Luther, and Calvin, and Knox? So Wycliffe, zealous for purity of doctrine and the salvation of souls, publicly exposed the doctrine of transubstantiation. "How canst thou, O priest," he exclaimed, "who art but a man, make thy

Maker? What! the thing that groweth in the fields to day, become thy God to-morrow! Woe to the adulterous generation that believeth the testimony of the pope, rather than the Word of God." Thus spoke the Holy man, inspired by the power of God resting upon him.

Wycliffe called upon his adversaries to refute his opinions, but their only answer was threats of imprisonment and the displeasure of the pope. They convened synods to condemn him. At the first synod in London, as they were about to pronounce sentence of condemnation, there was an earthquake that struck terror into the whole assembly, so weak and superstitious were they, and so conscious of the wrong part they were enacting. At another council held at Oxford, he defended his teaching with such courage and power, that not a single voice was raised to condemn him. They were utterly confounded by his cogent reasoning. Neither pope, nor archbishop, nor special councils could silence the bold reformer. God was with him, and therefore he was strong and safe.

In 1380 he gave to the English people his translation of the Bible. Some fragments of Holy Scripture had already been translated into English. The venerable Bede had translated the Gospel according to St. John centuries before. The learned men at the court of Alfred the Great had translated the four gospels. There was also a version of the Psalms and a few books of the Old Testament. But these few manuscript copies were all hidden away in the

libraries of the convents. So soon as he had finished his translation it was copied out and circulated throughout the kingdom. This was his greatest work for England. The queen, wife of Richard II., learned English in order to be able to read the wonderful book that had created such a stir in the country. She so prized the gospels, that she made them known to Arundel, Archbishop of York. He read them himself, and rebuked the prelates who neglected to study them. So rapidly did the good news spread, that, as a contemporary writer affirms, you could not meet two men on the highway but one of them was a disciple of Wycliffe.

However, the monks and lower clergy were deadly opposed to this innovation. "It is heresy," they cried, "to speak of Holy Scripture in English. Learn to believe in the teaching of the Church rather than in the Gospel."

For ten years the good work went on; but then a motion was made in the House of Lords to seize and burn all copies of the Bible. To this the Duke of Lancaster replied, "Are we the very dregs of humanity that we cannot possess the laws of our religion in our own language?" Such, no doubt, was the opinion of Rome.

These were the four grand phases in Wycliffe's life-work. He first asserted, as a politician, the supremacy of the king and Parliament, as opposed to the supremacy of the pope. Then by means of his "Poor Priests" he proclaimed the Gospel to the poor.

Thirdly, he asserted the supremacy of Christ and the Word of God in the Church, as opposed to the pope and the decisions of Church councils, and gave the Bible to the people in their own language. Fourthly, he exposed the doctrinal teaching of the Romish Church, especially in regard to the sacraments and the sacrifice of the mass. His profound study of the Bible made him an able theologian. Wycliffe was truly a friend of the people. He spent his life in their behalf, and always stood up for their liberties and rights.

In his great work, "Trialogus," he promulgated the grand truths of Protestantism and evangelical religion. "The Church has fallen," he declared, "because she has abandoned the Gospel and preferred the laws of the pope."

John Wycliffe was the first great reformer in Christendom. If Luther, and Calvin, and Knox were the fathers of the Reformation in their respective countries, then he, as sounding the first warning note against the corruptions of Rome, was its grandfather, and well deserves the beautiful appellation—the Morning star of the Reformation.

CHAPTER V.

STATE OF RELIGION FROM WYCLIFFE TO KNOX.

“A bishop must be blameless as the steward of God, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”—TITUS i. 9.

WYCLIFFE'S work did not die with his death. The great truths of the Gospel which he had so diligently taught during his life did not fail to bring forth fruit after his death. His work was enthusiastically taken up by his followers, who were known by the name of Lollards. His theology, as well as his English Bible, exerted a mighty power in the land. In the forefront of all his teaching he placed the sole supremacy of the Scriptures as the only rule of life and doctrine. And having put the Bible in the hands of the English people in their own language, all were able to compare the teaching of the Church with this infallible standard. Thus he opened the eyes of the nation to see how far the Church had descended in the path of corruption, in doctrine as well as in life. He magnified the Word of God as opposed to human tradition and the teaching of the Church. He magnified Christ, as the soul and centre

of Christianity. Men are saved by Christ, and not by the Church. He laid special stress on the necessity of the Incarnation of Christ in order that He might render a perfect obedience to God's law in our nature. He insisted with equal emphasis on the necessity of Christ's death for us as our Substitute, "bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. While asserting the perfect sufficiency of Christ's obedience and death as an atonement for sins, he rejected the popish dogma which gave rise to the scandalous traffic in indulgences—namely, the superfluous merits of Christ and the Saints, of which the Church was the depository, and which the pope could dispense on his own terms. He declared that the renewal or regeneration of the soul is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is not accomplished by penance and fasting, and confession, and the rites of the Church. To believe in the power of man in the regeneration of the soul he declared to be "the great heresy of the Church of Rome." He also maintained in accordance with Scripture that "Faith is the gift of God," and puts aside all claim of human merit. The one thing essential in the Christian life and in the Lord's Supper is not formal rites and superstitious ceremonies, but communion with Christ by faith, according to the power of the spiritual life conferred in regeneration. He recognised as a true Scriptural Church that only which acknowledged Christ as the Head; the Word of God as its only rule and directory; and the Holy Spirit as its life and animating principle. Whatever the Bible enjoined was to be strictly

observed; and whatever had no sanction in the Word of God was to be regarded as man's invention and heresy. He thus insisted upon having a pure Scriptural Church, both in government and in doctrine. Let Christians submit, he said, not to the word of a priest, but to the Word of God. How nobly he contended for the authority of Christ and His Word! Himself a priest and a doctor of theology, he would not magnify himself and his teaching above the Word of God. In the matter of Church government he advocated the Presbyterian theory as opposed to the Episcopal. In the primitive Church there were but two orders, the presbyter and the deacon—presbyter and bishop being one and the same. In reference to the Lord's Supper, he rejected the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation. He defined a sacrament to be "a visible and effectual sign, instituted by Christ, of an invisible reality." To be recognised as a sacrament, he held that it must have the authority of Christ. Only two of the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church had this authority—namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Therefore he rejected the other five. He rejected Penance, Confirmation, and Extreme Unction, as wholly unscriptural; and the other two, Ordination and Marriage, although sanctioned and enjoined by Scripture, he did not recognise as sacraments. In regard to Penance, he declared that true penitence, genuine heart-contrition for sin, with the forsaking of it, is what God requires; and Absolution he declared to be a daring assumption of Rome.

He held that confirmation, in the sense of imparting grace to those confirmed, had no place in Scripture; and therefore denied it a place among the sacraments. But the dogma which he persistently attacked with all his force and learning was the doctrine of transubstantiation. This he held to be a gross perversion of the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on this subject is, that the whole substance of the bread and wine is changed at the moment of consecration into the real body and blood of Christ, so that it is no longer bread and wine, but the soul and divinity of Christ—a whole Christ. That there may be no misapprehension, I shall quote the exact words of their belief, as given in the Canons and Catechisms of the Council of Trent, drawn up in 1562, and which is to-day accepted by the entire Roman Catholic Church as their own authoritative exposition of the doctrine:—

Canon I. “If any man shall deny that in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist there is contained truly, really, and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ,—and, therefore, a whole Christ,—but shall say that He is only in it a sign, or figure, or power, let him be accursed.”

Canon II. “If any shall say that in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist there remains the substance of the bread and wine, together with the body and blood our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall deny that wonderful and peculiar conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and the whole substance of the wine into the blood, while only the appearance of bread and wine remains, which conversion the Catholic Church most aptly calls Transubstantiation, let him be accursed.”

Canon VI. “If any shall say that in the holy sacrament of

the Eucharist, Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, is not to be adored, and that outwardly with the worship of *Latria*, . . . nor carried about solemnly in procession, or that He might not be publicly exhibited to the people that He may be worshipped, let him be accursed."

The Catechism of the Council of Trent remarks upon these canons: "It is also in this place to be explained by the pastors that there is contained not only the true body of Christ, and whatever belongs to a true definition (or description) of a body, such as BONES and NERVES, but a whole Christ."

This, then, is the doctrine which Wycliffe and all the reformers attacked, as being not only unscriptural but idolatrous. It affirms, first, that by the act of consecration by the priest, the bread and wine cease to be bread and wine, and are instantly converted into the real body, blood, bones, nerves, soul, and divinity of Christ. And, secondly, that the host, or consecrated wafer, is to be worshipped as God, when lifted up by the priest, or carried about in processions. And, observe, it cannot be said that the worshippers are only required to reverence the consecrated wafer. They are bound to worship it as very God—that is, with the worship of *Latria*. The Roman Catholic Church recognises three degrees of worship: *doulia*—worship rendered to saints and holy angels; *hyperdoulia*—a higher degree, rendered to the Virgin Mary; and *Latria*—the highest degree of worship, rendered to God alone. It is with this highest degree of worship that they are to adore the host, or victim, as the wafer

is called. They are bound to believe that the wafer becomes the very body, soul, and divinity of Christ; and as such it is to be worshipped as God. The priest thus claims to be able to perform the most stupendous miracle ever wrought by human or Divine power—namely, to cause a thing to be that which it is not. Taste it, it is bread. Touch it, it is mere lifeless matter. Break it, crush it, you find no bones or any throb or thrill of life. Let the rats find it in the priest's house, as in the case of Father Chiniquy, it cannot defend itself. And yet poor deluded mortals must believe that this wafer possesses the bones, nerves, life, and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, or be forever accursed. They are asked to believe not only what is above reason—faith can do that; but what is absolutely contrary to reason and to fact—superstition alone can do that. Their worship, therefore, becomes idolatry, in worshipping a lifeless thing; and their faith becomes superstition, by believing what is absurd and impossible. No wonder, therefore, that Wycliffe and his followers lifted up their voice against this God-dishonouring doctrine, as did all the reformers that succeeded them.

In 1395, eleven years after Wycliffe's death, his followers petitioned Parliament to "abolish celibacy, transubstantiation, prayers for the dead, offerings to images, auricular confession," and other superstitious practices, such as "blessing oil, salt, wax, incense, and pilgrims' staffs." In the preamble to the petition they said, "The essence of the worship that comes from

Rome consists in signs and ceremonies, and not in the efficacious power of the Holy Ghost, and therefore is not that which Christ has ordained."

The pious Queen Anne, wife of Richard II., was now dead, and Richard, who did good or evil according to the influence brought to bear upon him at the moment, yielding to the persuasion of Arundel, Archbishop of York, forbade Parliament to take the petition of the reformers into consideration, and even threatened with death the leaders of the new movement, if they did not desist from spreading their opinions. Thus the work of Wycliffe received a severe check. However, as the annalist records, Richard had no sooner withdrawn his hand from the Gospel than God withdrew His hand from him. For in 1399 his cousin, Henry, son of the Duke of Lancaster, usurped the throne.

The wily archbishop, observing the course of events, forsook Richard at the moment of his fall, gave his hand to Henry IV., and placed the crown on his head; and at the same time whispered in his ear, "To establish your throne, conciliate the clergy and sacrifice the Lollards." "I will protect the Church," replied Henry, being caught in the snare so skilfully laid for him.

To show his zeal for the Church, Henry IV. ordered every heretic to be burned alive. He soon had an opportunity of putting the severe statute into practice. The Rev. Sir William Sawtrè, a most pious and inoffensive priest, had dared to say, "Instead of adoring the cross on which Christ suffered, I adore

the Christ who suffered on the cross.’ This was pronounced heresy. They were bound to worship the cross and the consecrated wafer, but they must not dare to worship Christ. This answers once for all the plea sometimes put forward on behalf of the Romish Church by those who are ignorant of her practices that the cross and images are used only as a medium through which Christ is worshipped. But William Sawtrè was pronounced a heretic, simply because he worshipped Christ; and the first of the fires of Smithfield was lighted around his body. He was burned alive in March, 1401; and thus had the distinction of being the first martyr to the Protestant religion.

Now a series of canons, known as “The Constitutions of Arundel,” were drawn up, forbidding the laity to read the Bible, and proclaiming that the pope was not a mere man, but a true God.

The year 1400 is memorable in the history of English Protestantism for having the first Act against heresy placed upon the statute-book. It was passed by a usurper, who required the support of the unscrupulous hierarchy of the Church of Rome to consolidate his throne; and he was base enough to purchase their support at so high a price.

The archbishop’s palace at Lambeth was soon filled with pious men, who were pronounced heretics, and cast into the dungeons, many of whom were burned alive at the stake. John Resby, an English priest, to escape persecution, fled to Scotland, and there

preached the Gospel. But in 1405 he was condemned as a heretic, and was burned alive at Perth.

Lord Cobham, better known as Sir John Oldcastle, who was in high favour with the king, offered an asylum to many of those who were persecuted. His favour with Henry secured his own safety. But no sooner was Henry IV. succeeded by his son, Henry V., than Arundel had him summoned before the king. In his defence he asserted the supremacy of the Scriptures. The archbishop replied, "We must believe what the holy Church of Rome teaches, without demanding Christ's authority." "Believe!" shouted the priests. "I am willing to believe all that God desires," he replied, "but that the pope should have authority to teach what is contrary to the Scriptures, that I shall never believe." He was led to the Tower condemned to die. Having effected his escape from the Tower, he took refuge in Wales, and thus prolonged his life for four years. In December, 1417, he was again taken, and at St. Giles he was suspended over a slow fire and burned to death.

The followers of Wycliffe were everywhere persecuted with brutal ferocity. The mad fanaticism of the Romish Church spent itself in adding degradation to cruelty. The annalist of this period records that it was decreed that they should be hanged on the king's account, and burned for God's—*incendio propter Deum, suspendio propter regem*. Thus these early reformers were compelled to hold their meetings in secret. The reformed religion, like primitive

Christianity, must pass through its baptism of blood before it can rise in resurrection power to overspread the land and become a blessing to the world.

These cruel and barbarous tortures were not the work of a fanatical archbishop merely. They received the full sanction of the Church of Rome. In 1415 the Council of Constance, the largest council ever assembled, solemnly denounced the writings of Wycliffe, and ordered his bones to be exhumed and burned. Huss, the Bohemian reformer, and Jerome of Prague, a man of brilliant talents and great devotion to the truth, were sentenced to the stake by this same council, being denied the privilege of defending themselves.

These brutal crimes—for they are crimes, not events—naturally suggest the inquiry, What kind of a pope filled the chair of St. Peter when such barbarous proceedings were sanctioned? Yes; the inquiry is natural, and the circumstances demand that it should be made. If the pope and the supreme council of the Romish Church are one and all converted into fiends in their public capacity, the world ought to know something of their private character.

The infallible Church had got into a very fallible state at this time. During the previous century, from 1309 to 1377, the papal court was removed from Rome and spent nearly seventy years' exile in Avignon, in France. Here the court became the centre of all manner of intrigue and frivolity and looseness and lewdness. At the death of Clement V. in 1312 the

French and Italian cardinals held a protracted struggle lasting two years, each party determined to elect their own nominee. At length John XXII., the candidate of the French party, by means of lying and strategy, secured the necessary majority of votes. He promised the Italian cardinals upon oath to transfer the papal court to Rome, if they would concur in his election. He swore that he would never mount horse except to go to Rome; and, leaving his oath and his Italian supporters behind him, he at once took ship for Avignon. Under Gregory XI. the papal court was brought back to Rome on account of political disturbances. He died the following year, and the Italian party in the council elected Urban VI. The French party, however, elected a Frenchman, Clement VII., who took up his residence at Avignon. For thirty years (1378-1409) there were two popes in the One Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church, each in turn excommunicating and anathematising the other.

It would be a very interesting study for some intelligent Roman Catholic to endeavour to find out with infallible certainty through which of these lines of rival popes apostolic succession has been transmitted. It would indeed form a very puzzling problem, as both parties seem to have had equal claims. The task, too, would be practically useless, even if the claims of one or other of the popes could be clearly established; for the Council of Pisa, summoned in 1409 specially to pronounce on the claims of the two rival popes,—Gregory XII., now pope in Rome, and Benedict XIII.,

pope in Avignon,—deposed both of the popes, and elected Alexander V. This infallible council, therefore, practically declared that during these thirty years, while infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit, they, by the will of God, had made a very serious mistake in placing the tiara upon the wrong head. Now surely that is a breaker on which apostolic succession must have made shipwreck. And certainly the *unity* of the Church, about which Roman Catholics boast so much, was broken at the same time. They claim to have ever been the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church. This episode in the history of the Church blots out the words “One,” “Catholic,” and “Apostolic;” and, under the next pope, the word “Holy” also is thrown overboard.

In 1410 Alexander V. was “removed,” to use a modern euphemism for murder, by poison, administered in all probability by his successor, one of the vilest wretches that ever trod the earth. He took the title of John XXIII. He had been a pirate in his youth. He called a council at Rome, and arranged that all the passes leading to Italy should be occupied by banditti, so as to prevent the arrival of the French bishops. However, in 1414, he was compelled to summon the Council of Constance. It was attended by 18,000 of the clergy, besides a host of princes and knights. This council not only condemned the reformers to be burned, but also deposed the pope, John XXIII. He was charged before the council with murder, gross immorality, simony, and other

crimes. Instead of defending himself against these formidable charges, thinking no doubt that discretion was the better part of valour, he fled in disguise. He was deposed by the council and taken prisoner. Evidently the Roman Catholic Church did not believe in the infallibility of the pope in those days. The Council of Constance did not scruple to assert its authority over the pope.

Again, in 1433, the pope, Eugene IV., and the council were in open conflict. The pope formally dissolved the council, but the council continued its deliberations. In 1439 the pope excommunicated the council, and the council, by way of returning the compliment, relieved the pope of his duties and chose another. In 1459 a General Council held at Mantua condemned the decisions of the General Council of Constance as heretical. So that neither popes nor councils were infallible in those times.

From this time to the Reformation the vice and immorality of the popes knew no bounds. Sixtus IV. established brothels at Rome to add to his income, and gave benefices to his friends and relatives, who possessed no qualifications whatever for filling them. His successor, Innocent VIII., filled the papal chair from 1484 to 1492. He was blessed with sixteen illegitimate children—sixteen innocents—eight innocent sons and eight innocent daughters. On this account, as it was sarcastically said at the time, "Rome was well entitled to call him *father*." Alexander VI., who died in 1503, two years before

John Knox was born, was, if possible, even more abominable in his life than his predecessors. Among other enormities he is reputed to have been guilty of incest with his own daughter.

This is but a brief sketch of the untold enormities of the papacy immediately prior to the Reformation. Monasteries and convents were also open sinks of iniquity. During all this time, however, there were earnest men on the Continent, as well as in England, who laboured zealously for a reform in the Church, in both head and members. This spirit of reform was manifested in the canons of the Councils of Pisa (1409), Constance (1414-1418), and Basle (1431-1443). However, these attempts at reformation all failed. They failed because they sought to lop off corrupt branches merely, instead of pulling up the upas tree by the roots. The Church of Rome had ceased to be *one*—had ceased to be *holy*—had ceased to be *catholic*—had ceased to be *apostolic*—had ceased to be in any true sense a Christian Church; and, therefore, it must give place in the good providence of God to a pure Scriptural church—the Church of the Reformation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND—HENRY VIII.

“Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church.”—*EPH.* v. 25.

THE English Reformation did not begin with Henry VIII. As we have already seen, Wycliffe and others had originated the movement which eventually overturned the papacy. It is no true theory of this great reform to assume that Henry VIII. was the prime factor in English Protestantism, or that the substitution of the English king for the Roman pontiff as the head of the Church, was the soul and substance of the Reformation. That was only the outward or political aspect of the struggle. Its soul and centre and motive power are to be found elsewhere. Neither churchly power nor kingly power could have accomplished so great a work. Two mightier powers than these were at work in Great Britain and on the Continent at the beginning of the sixteenth century—the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Another important factor in the Reformation was the revival of learning. It became the medium of

spreading abroad a knowledge of God's Word. As there can be no true religious life except by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, changing and renewing the heart and life, so it is impossible that a corrupted church should be thoroughly purified by any other means.

Church life is but an extension of individual Christian life. And, as the individual heart, corrupted by sin and swayed by low passions, can be renewed and purified only by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God—"by the washing of water through the Word"—so must it be with the Christian Church. No mere external power, whether it be that of the king, or of the pope, or of church councils, or of the populace, can regenerate a church any more than the heart of man. He, therefore, who would truly tell the story of the Reformation, must go back behind the several human agents and external circumstances, and see the Spirit of God brooding over the religious chaos of that time, as He brooded over the chaos of creation, bringing all into a perfect cosmos. What lighted up the Reformation of the sixteenth century with such glory and brilliancy, and placed it on a higher platform than all previous revivals, and made it permanent, was the prominence and authority accorded to the Word of God, together with a profounder and more intelligent faith in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of true believers. Wycliffe, and Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingli, and Knox, all claimed for the people the right to read and

interpret the Word of God for themselves under the guidance and illumination of the Spirit of God. The place that had been conceded to the pope and the councils of the church was now accorded to Christ and the Scriptures. The Reformation, therefore, was not merely external and political—the outcome of the caprice of a king who had been thwarted in his projects by the pope; but internal and religious, the spontaneous outcome of a deeper religious life, and intenser love and reverence for the Word of God.

The Reformation had struck its roots deeply in English soil before Henry VIII. was born; so that it cannot be said that it originated with him. It lost, moreover, the ground gained during the latter part of his reign under his immediate successor, “the Bloody Mary,” who was a bigoted Roman Catholic; so that the work of the Reformation was not completed and established in Henry’s time.

In England the work of reformation depended more exclusively upon the silent power of God’s Word, than in almost any other country. There was no commanding personality in England able to rouse the nation, as Luther and Knox roused Germany and Scotland. But Wycliffe had given the English Bible to the English people, and the scholarly Erasmus had given the New Testament in Greek to the learned in the land.

There can be no true reformation in doctrine or in life, either in the Church or in the individual heart, apart from the Word and Spirit of God. The Scrip-

tures, by setting forth the sinless life and vicarious death of Christ, as the sinner's Substitute, and the doctrine of justification by faith and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, brought light and life into English hearts and English homes. Reformation through the instrumentality of God's Word meant much more than merely rejecting the claims of the papal hierarchy. It meant the surrender of the heart of the nation to God, and the conforming of the laws of the nation to the law of God.

Although the Word of God was the chief agent of reform, still God used other instruments to separate the English Church from the Roman see. The spiritual power of the pope was broken by the Word of God. His temporal power was broken by the authority of the king. So far as the pope possessed temporal power, so far his authority was political and national; and this power could be broken only by the representative of national and political power in the country—namely, the king. But the rejection of the pope's spiritual power over the souls and consciences of men was the great work of the Reformation; and this was effected by the Word of God revealing the way of salvation and the path of duty.

Wycliffe's English Bible had prepared the hearts of the common people for casting off the galling yoke of Rome; and the Greek Testament of Erasmus opened the eyes of the learned to see how totally the Church had corrupted the doctrines of Scripture. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light" was especially true in the

early history of the Reformation. This fact was so deeply impressed upon the minds of the leading reformers, that we find Wycliffe, and Luther, and Tyndale giving the Bible to the masses in their own language. They themselves found peace and rest to their souls, by being pointed to Christ through the medium of the Word; and they were convinced that the greatest blessing they could confer upon their fellow-men was to place this precious treasure within their reach.

The priests declaimed against Erasmus from their pulpits, as they had previously done against Wycliffe. They said, "This man has committed the unpardonable sin. He is a heretic, a very antichrist. If this book be tolerated, it will be the death of the papacy. We must drive this man from the University, and turn him out of the Church." So it has been with the papacy in all ages. Its teachers know too well that its corrupt doctrines and dark designs cannot stand the light of God's truth. So they denounce not only the Greek Testament, but the Greek language as well, —the language in which Christ spoke, and in which the apostles wrote. One of them even denounced the book and the language while preaching in his turn before the king. On leaving the church, Henry said, "Bring this priest to me;" and, addressing Sir Thomas More, he said, "You shall defend the Greek cause, and I will listen to the disputation." The priest, however, knowing that he could not defend his wild ravings, fell on his knees before the king, saying, "I do not

know what spirit impelled me to do it." "A spirit of madness," said the king, "and not the spirit of Jesus Christ. Have you ever read Erasmus?" "No, your majesty." Away with you, then, you simpleton! How dare you preach against that of which you are totally ignorant!" The king was a friend of learning and the Word of God; and the Romish Church misjudged the man when they thought by empty declamation to enlist the sympathies of Henry VIII. in their efforts to prevent the revival of learning and the circulation of the Scriptures. The different orders of monks went throughout the land preaching against this new heresy. "Why should they want the Scriptures? They had the apostolical succession of the clergy, and what more did they need?"

While this storm of opposition raged, the Word of God was silently doing its work. It had received a warm welcome at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Students and Fellows were to be seen eagerly reading the Greek Testament at the colleges, and earnestly advocating the urgent necessity of a thorough reformation of the Church in doctrine and in life. They appealed to the written Word as the only ultimate authority, and openly advocated the necessity of re-establishing the Kingdom of Christ after the model of primitive times.

Among these earnest inquirers after truth were Thomas Bilney, William Tyndale, and John Fryth. They declared that no priest on earth had power to grant remission of sins—that pardon of sin can be

obtained only by faith in Christ; and that faith, when genuine, purifies the heart and life.

Bilney, who was a distinguished young doctor, thoroughly versed in canon law, had long sought peace with God and the salvation of his soul. The priests prescribed fasting, vigils, masses, indulgences; but still there was no light, no liberty, no peace. He heard some of his friends talk of this new book, the Greek Testament; but as his confessors had strictly prohibited all Greek and Hebrew books, as the sources of all heresies, he hesitated. At last he gained courage, secretly bought a copy, and shut himself up in his room to study it. His eye lighted upon the words of Paul addressed to Timothy, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." "What! St. Paul the chief of sinners, and yet sure of being saved?" He pondered deeply over this new and wondrous revelation, and light dawned upon his troubled soul. Christ saves sinners, and he was saved. Joy and peace filled his whole soul. He was a new man.

Tyndale found peace in the same way. He began to read the Greek Testament simply as a study of literature. This marvellous book laid hold upon him in a manner that excited wonderment. It spoke to him of Christ, the Saviour of sinners, and regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit. In a short time he became a new creature in Christ Jesus. Other members of the University gathered around him, and

eagerly drank from the same fountain of truth and salvation.

Tyndale at Oxford, and Bilney at Cambridge, found Christ and salvation through the Scriptures in the same year that Luther had found peace in Germany. God was working in England and Germany, and Switzerland at the same time by His Word and Spirit. The Reformation has commenced, and as yet Henry VIII. has no quarrel with Rome.

Four years after these events, in 1521, Henry VIII. wrote a book against Luther, and obtained from the pope the title of "Defender of the Faith;" and also promoted a persecution of the reformers.

Tyndale left Cambridge in the year 1519, and returned to his home in the valley of the Severn, and became tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh. Here he met at table many distinguished men, attracted by Sir John's bountiful table and generous hospitality. They discussed the theological questions now agitating all minds in England and Germany. Tyndale not only discussed doctrine and proved everything by Scripture, but aimed at bringing home to the hearts of all what he significantly called "the sweet inner marrow of the Gospel." On Sundays Tyndale preached in the little chapel attached to the mansion, with great unction and power. Mild and gentle in his manner, it was said of him that he was St. John and St. Paul combined, uniting the mildness of the one with the strength and argumentative force of the other.

The little chapel soon became too small for the con-

gregations that assembled ; and the people of Bristol flocked to hear him on St. Austin's Green. Everywhere the priests opposed his work, and denounced him as a heretic, and trampled under foot the seed he had sown. He thus was made to feel the urgent need for the Word of God in the language of the people ; for Wycliffe's Bible had long ago been prescribed by the pope. "Without the Bible," he said, "it is impossible to establish the laity in the truth." Therefore, he will devote himself to the work of giving the people the Word of God in their own language.

Meanwhile, the Romish hierarchy are vowing vengeance on Tyndale and all who dared to assert the sole supremacy of the Scriptures. Cardinal Wolsey and the Bishop of Lincoln prevailed upon the king, by false representations, to sanction a persecution of the heretics, as the reformers were called. On 20th October, 1521, Henry signed an order commanding all his subjects to assist the bishop in putting down heresy. Thus was inaugurated a reign of terror throughout the diocese of Lincoln.

Scrivener, a pious colporteur, who was employed to carry from house to house the books and tracts of the reformers, was burned at the stake ; and, by a horrible refinement of cruelty, they put the torches that were to light the fire in the hands of his own children ; and then, held by the strong hands of the executioners, they were compelled to hold the burning torches to the body of their own father. Such are the tender

mercies of Rome—the infallible, unchanging Church of Rome.

These persecutions compelled Tyndale to bid farewell to his patron and protector. If he is to carry out his cherished design of giving the Word of God to the common people, he must seek an asylum elsewhere. A brave man of God, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, he feared neither toil, nor poverty, nor danger, if he could only serve God and his country by putting the Scriptures within the reach of all.

He left the banks of the Severn, and repaired to London. Here his love for Christ and the souls of men constrained him to preach the Gospel in all its fulness and freeness, regardless of personal consequences. He boldly proclaimed the doctrine of justification by faith, and thus took first rank among the reformers of his day in England. He hoped to find a patron and protector in Tonstal, the Bishop of London, who was a learned man and favourable to literature. However, in this he was disappointed. God was teaching him that he was not to rely on the help of man. And now, mounting up on the wings of faith, he said: "The people are hungering for the Word of God. I will translate it whatever they may do to me. God will not suffer me to perish until I have finished His work."

Humphrey Monmouth, one of his hearers, who had found the way of life under Colet's preaching, in 1515, inquired as to his means of living, and invited him to his house that he might prosecute his work.

His college friend, John Fryth, now joined him at Monmouth's house, and, with consuming ardour, they shut themselves up in their room to translate into English the Greek Testament of Erasmus. Persecution, however, soon interrupted their work. After one year's residence in London, by the advice of friends, Tyndale sought an asylum in Germany. Shaking off the dust of his feet against the Romish hierarchy, with a firm faith in God, he left his native land that, by God's help, he might bring back to it the precious treasure of the Scriptures.

He settled down to his work in Hamburg, and the next year, 1524, published the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Two years later he had completed the whole of the New Testament. Thus Tyndale's New Testament was in the hands of the English people eight years before Martin Luther had given the German Bible to the German people. The English Reformation therefore was not imported from Germany, but grew up on English soil. Tyndale had preceded Luther, both in declaring the way of salvation through simple faith in the sinner's Saviour, and in giving his countrymen the Word of God in their mother tongue.

In January, 1526, Tyndale's New Testament was doing its beneficent, soul-saving work in the homes and universities of England. The revival of learning in England had prepared the soil for the reception of the good seed of the Word. And now with the Word of God in their hands, and the Spirit of God in their

hearts, and Christ sanctified in their lives, these early reformers lighted a torch in England which no papal hierarchy or kingly power can ever extinguish. Tyn-dale was beheaded, and Fryth was burned at the stake; but their work was imperishable, because it was God's work.

The Reformation has begun, and Henry VIII. is still a true son of Rome and a persecutor of reformers. During the progress of the Reformation, and before the nation through its sovereign had formally cast off the yoke of Rome, there were differences between the king and the pope—a trial and a divorce; and partisans of Rome call that the Reformation in England. But Henry VIII. was in no sense the author or originator of the English Reformation. It was originated by a much mightier power—namely, the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER VII.

REFORMATION WORTHIES—BILNEY AND LATIMER.

“The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor Me.”—JOHN xvi. 2, 3.

WHILE Tyndale was translating the Word of God on the Continent, his friend Bilney was busily engaged at Cambridge preparing the ground for the reception of the good seed of the Gospel. He was the first to receive the light of the Gospel through the reading of Erasmus' Greek Testament; and full of zeal in his first love, he soon succeeded in gathering around him an influential company of Masters and Fellows of the University. He was an eminent doctor of canon law; but after he had found Christ as the satisfaction of his soul through the study of the Gospels, there was no canon law for him but Scripture.

Among the first to join Bilney was George Stafford, professor of divinity, a man greatly admired for his profound learning and holy, devoted life. His conversion created quite a sensation at Cambridge, for he possessed immense influence at the University. He

now expounded the Gospels and St. Paul's Epistles with such lucidity and power that the students proclaimed him to be another Paul. While the other professors at Cambridge were teaching that reconciliation with God must be wrought out by prayers, and penances, and the strict observance of all the rites and ceremonies of the Church, Stafford proclaimed, on the authority of Scripture, that redemption was already accomplished—that reconciliation was effected by the finished work of Christ—that the satisfaction that He offered to the holy law of God was complete, and did not require to be supplemented by the formal rites of the Church—that eternal life was the free gift of God to all who personally accepted Christ as Saviour. He also taught that popery had set up the kingdom of the law, but the Reformation was reviving and restoring the Kingdom of Grace. Bilney did noble service for God and the truth, when, by the help of the Holy Spirit, he won over to the reformed doctrine the most illustrious professor in the English universities. But there were still greater conquests in store for this holy man of faith and prayer.

In 1505, the year in which John Knox was born, and on which Martin Luther entered the convent of St. Augustine, Hugh Latimer entered the University of Cambridge. After taking his degree, he was specially noted for his asceticism and enthusiasm, and conscientious scruples. As the Romish Missal directs that the sacramental wine should be mixed with water, he would be greatly troubled lest he had not

added enough of water! Such trifles would fill him with the keenest remorse; for he sought soul-rest in strict observance of ordinances, and not through faith in Christ. He thus became a bigoted and fanatical priest, zealous for his Church, and a persecutor, like Saul of Tarsus. But the same power that subdued the persecuting Saul, and changed the current of his life, was soon to change the heart and life of the enthusiastic Latimer. Bilney had been watching his movements, and became deeply interested in him, knowing that a man of such intense earnestness and enthusiasm would be a mighty power for good if once brought to a true knowledge of the Gospel. He took the matter to God in prayer, as was his custom,—for he was mighty in wrestling with God,—and then planned how he might win him to Christ. He resolved to go to him to make confession, that he might thus pour the marrow of the Gospel into his ear. Latimer, in relating the circumstance, says, “He came to me, and desired me for God’s sake to hear his confession.” The enthusiastic priest, thinking that Bilney had been won back to the Church by his thesis against Luther and Melancthon, eagerly embraced the opportunity, as he hoped, of receiving the leader of the reformers into the bosom of the Church again. Bilney’s confession was simply a recital of his personal experience. In earnest pathetic tones he described the agony of soul through which he had passed in struggling into light and peace. He had, according to the direction of the Church, given himself to prayers, and

penance, and fasting and vigils, but all to no purpose. But the moment he saw Jesus as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," his whole soul was filled with heavenly peace, and from that day he had the sweet consciousness that God was his Father and ever-present Friend; the burden of sin was taken away, and his happiness and joy in the service of God knew no bounds. Bilney's prayer was answered. The sword of the Spirit had pierced Latimer's heart. He is a new man. God had spoken by the lips of His servant. Latimer now regarded with amazement and horror his past life of opposition to God. The confessor weeps in the presence of the penitent; and Bilney pronounces the true words of absolution: "Brother, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool; for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Latimer, to use his own words, "at once forsook the doctors of the school and all their fooleries," and shut himself up with Bilney to study the Word of God. It was at the fountain of God's Word that these young men received that nourishment and strength which enabled them in after life calmly to mount the scaffold and seal their testimony with their blood. The change in Latimer's life and disposition was most marked. The superstitious fanatic became meek and gentle and Christlike. Instead of seeking company and the pleasures of the table, he chose solitude, that he might feed upon the Word of God.

The conversion of Latimer gave a mighty impetus to the cause of evangelical truth. It recalled to many minds the miraculous conversions of apostolic times, when a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith. The students now flocked to hear Bilney proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, conscious that the power of Christ rested upon him; and many young hearts received the leaven of the Gospel through his earnest ministry. He boldly proclaimed the evangelical doctrines of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ; regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit; and justification by simple faith in Christ.

Bilney, however, was more a man of prayer than a rousing preacher; and a man of enthusiasm, and energy, and eloquence, like Latimer, was needed to rouse the nation. Latimer at once came forward as a bold and thorough reformer, and shook off the sacerdotal system which makes the salvation of the soul depend upon the deeds and intention of the priest, and cordially embraced the Gospel plan of salvation, which seeks to point the soul direct to Christ. With Tyndale's New Testament in the hands of the people in their own language; with George Stafford expounding the Epistles of Paul from the professor's chair; with Thomas Bilney wrestling in prayer with God, and exhibiting the power and blessedness of the Gospel in a holy, consecrated life; and Latimer, with eloquence and power, preaching the Gospel, and urging every one to flee to Christ as the Lamb of God who

taketh away the sin of the world,—the Reformation sun had risen on England, dispelling the darkness, while Henry VIII. is still a defender of the Roman Catholic faith.

The Reformation in England had its origin in the faithful preaching of a pure Gospel, and not in the quarrel between the king and the pope.

The light of the Gospel which had dispelled the darkness of Romish superstition at Cambridge, was also to penetrate the thick gloom at Oxford. Cardinal Wolsey, anxious to adorn his new college, which he had founded at Oxford, invited John Clark, a distinguished doctor, as the first professor of divinity. He, too, had found Christ as the anchor of his soul; and no sooner was he installed at Oxford than he began to lecture on St. Paul's Epistles, and to expound the Gospels, and to preach and teach daily with great eloquence and power.

His influence over the young men at the University was remarkable, and many were brought to a true knowledge of Christ, through his teaching and preaching, accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Word of God and the Spirit of God were regenerating these ancient seats of learning, and raising up a band of noble men who were soon to make Rome tremble to its foundation.

In 1523, such was the influence of the reformers that the bishops determined to arrest the leaders on a charge of heresy. The agents were appointed and arrived at Cambridge to commence their work of

inquisition. But the sudden death of the pope caused Wolsey to countermand the order, as his whole time would now be occupied in intriguing for the chair of St. Peter, for which he was a candidate. Thus, in the providence of God, the reformers received a short breathing time, which they diligently improved in advancing the Kingdom of Grace. Fortunately for England, Wolsey failed to secure election; for, with a man of such marvellous capacity and bigotry in the pontifical chair, the evangelical religion must surely have been stamped out in England. Wolsey's chagrin and disappointment also did much to damp his ardour, and even to disgust him with the way things were conducted at Rome. Failing to secure the object of his life's ambition, he determined to show his power on a smaller scale. If he could not rule the Catholic world from the pontifical throne, he could at least govern the Catholic Church in England. So he undertakes to reform the Church by removing certain of the grosser abuses. The monasteries were carefully inspected; and those religious houses that had become notorious for their corruption and immorality were suppressed, and their revenues applied to Wolsey's new college at Oxford. A patron of learning, and a great admirer of learned men, he would have allowed more liberty to learned doctors than to the despised Lollards. During subsequent events, however, to save himself, he found it convenient to accuse the reformers.

While Tyndale was translating the Scriptures, and

Stafford was expounding the doctrines of the Gospel in the University, Latimer was declaring from the pulpits in Cambridge that the common people ought to be allowed to read the Bible in their own language. He placed the law of God above the authority of kings and popes and emperors. His hearers were delighted. It seemed to them like life from the dead. The true evangel had long been buried beneath dead forms and superstitious ceremonies, but now there is a glorious resurrection. The breath of a new life is perceptible on every hand. *Cambridge is won for Christ.*

As yet there is no formal separation from Rome, and no reform in ritual. But the Word of God was restored to its true place in the minds and hearts of the people, and men were directed to look to Christ for pardon and salvation, and not to the priests and the rites of the Church; and that was the essence of the Reformation, which carried with it all other reforms. When Christ and the Scriptures are set up in the hearts of the people, then the rule of Rome is at an end.

The Romish hierarchy by their actions testified to their own belief in this great truth. So they set themselves to preach against the Scriptures. They said: "Latimer extols in his sermons the blessings of the Gospel, we must preach a sermon to show its dangers." The professors were enjoined to have a strict oversight of the students under their care, and to charge them that if they sympathised with the evangelical party they would bar the way to their promotion. But the

generous-hearted students chose rather to suffer persecution with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures and rewards of sin. Stafford continued his prelections, Bilney prayed and visited the poor, and Latimer preached to the people with stirring eloquence and lively wit. And thus the doctrines of the Gospel were published on every hand, and many souls were converted to Christ.

But "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Latimer is forbidden to preach either in the University or in the diocese. The most brilliant preacher of his time was to be silenced for no other fault than that he faithfully preached Christ and advocated the study of the Word of God. But Latimer was not so easily vanquished. The churches were closed against him, but the homes of the common people were open to the earnest preacher of God's Word. However, he was not to remain long without a pulpit. In the same year Robert Barnes, a doctor of great learning, became prior to the monastery of Cambridge. Although he had no experience as yet of the power of the Gospel in his own heart, he expounded to his class the Epistles of Paul, wishing to introduce the study of Holy Scripture into the colleges. Bilney, the man of faith and prayer, sets his heart on leading Barnes to a true knowledge of the Saviour; and in a short time another trophy is won for the Gospel of Christ. He, too, throws his whole soul into the new movement, and invites Latimer to preach in the monastery, which was not

under the jurisdiction of the bishop. Here crowds eagerly flocked to hear the Word of God. Fryth, who for a time assisted Tyndale in translating the New Testament, was beginning to take a foremost place among the reformers. He united to humility and gentleness great firmness and courage.

While Tyndale's New Testament was crossing the seas, Latimer, Bilney, Stafford, Barnes, and Fryth, arranged for a simultaneous attack upon the corruptions of the Church. This was on the Sunday before Christmas, in the year 1525. But the time had not come to favour Zion. The seed of the Word must first be scattered abroad. A society was formed with the object of assembling all who wished to study the Word of God, and the writings of the German reformers. Thus a pure Scriptural church was formed at Cambridge, outside of the Romish Church. A similar work was going on at Oxford. Wolsey had invited some of the ablest Fellows of Cambridge to teach at Oxford, Fryth among others. They held meetings, like their friends at Cambridge, and formed a society. Thus God was preparing the way for the Scriptures. England was all astir with excitement and expectation, when, in the beginning of 1526, Tyndale's New Testament was landed on the shores.

The bishops did all in their power to stamp out this revival of true religion and love of God's Word, and Henry VIII. supported them in their unholy war against the Gospel; but God had said, "Let there be light," and the victory was sure. God, by His Word

and Spirit, was raising up in England a spiritual Church, before He broke the fetters that bound her to Rome. He first gave life, and afterwards liberty. But as the teaching of the Lord Jesus had to be sealed by His blood, so was it to be with these holy, devoted men. The scholars of Oxford and Cambridge must receive the crown of martyrdom—the baptism of blood; for, “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.” Christ in becoming the Saviour of the world had to shed his life’s blood, and those who at this time were called to be saviours of their country must do the same. It is thus that men become convinced of the truth and reality of the Gospel. Garret, and Dalaber, and Clark, and Fryth, and many others at Oxford, were thrown into prison, for that which is a monstrous crime in the eyes of the papacy—reading and circulating the Word of God.

The same mercy was meted out to the scholars of Cambridge. Bilney, Latimer, Stafford, Barnes, and their friends were pounced upon; but most of them had time to conceal their books before the agents of Wolsey arrived, and thus obtained a short breathing time. The pestilent air of the foul dungeon carried off the elegant scholar Clark, and three others, after six month’s imprisonment. The rest were liberated, and many of them lived to do good service to the Reformation. But the Sacred Scriptures were placed under the ban. The clergy declared that they “contained a pestilent poison.” On the 24th October, 1526, the Bishop of London enjoined his archdeacons

to seize all copies of the New Testament in English. And the Archbishop of Canterbury issued an injunction against all books containing "any particle of the New Testament." Such was the treatment the words of Christ and the apostles received at the hands of that organisation, which arrogantly claims to be the only true, Christian, and apostolic Church. But Rome had a stronger power to fight against than the scholars and teachers of Oxford and Cambridge. God was on their side; and He would see that His Word should have free course and be glorified. Faster than they could destroy the New Testament, new editions poured in from the Continent. And thus, in defiance of the king and the clergy, the good seed of the Word was disseminated throughout the land.


But a more determined effort was to be made to suppress the Word of God. At the meeting of Convocation, in November, 1520, the Bible, and a number of books by Tyndale, Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, Fryth, and others were proscribed. It was declared to be unlawful for the laity to read the Bible in their mother-tongue. It was classed among heretical books; and Henry issued a proclamation that no one should keep any heretical book in his house. How, then, can it be said that he was the patron and father of the Reformation who was its persecutor?

Before the close of the year 1531, Bilney, Bayfield, and many others, for the single offence of possessing God's Word, by the authority of Henry VIII., cruelly perished at the stake.

CHAPTER VIII.

HENRY VIII. AND THE POPE.

“If a man shall take his brother’s wife, it is an unclean thing ;
. . . they shall be childless.”—LEV. XX. 21.

S we have already seen, the Reformation in England was brought about through the agency of the Word of God and the Spirit of God, and not through the differences between Henry and the pope. The Reformation sun had risen upon England while Henry VIII. was a zealous champion of Rome and a persecutor of the reformers. The essence of the Reformation was spiritual life, which neither pope nor king could communicate, but the Spirit of God only. Had there not been spiritual life, and had not the supremacy of Christ and the Word of God been established in the hearts of the people, the rupture with Rome might have taken place without any real reformation in life, and doctrine, and ritual. The result would simply have been the transference of the nominal headship of the Church from a worldly-minded pope to a worldly-minded and ambitious king. No one who knows

anything of history will give Henry VIII. the credit of being a true reformer, much less "the father" of the English Reformation. It was simply a coincidence that Henry VIII. sat on the throne of England when the reformers and the Romish hierarchy measured swords with each other,—the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, with the authority of the pope.

However, Henry's quarrel with the pope is a matter of history; and although it was not either the cause or the completion of the Reformation, yet it no doubt hastened on the rupture that for ever separated England from Rome. It certainly was a powerful instrumentality in exposing the hollowness and duplicity of the papal court, and in preparing the English people to shake off that religious superstition which constrained them to reverence and cling to the Church of their fathers, notwithstanding its known departure from the teaching and practice of Christ and the apostles. Our study of the Reformation, therefore, would be incomplete without some reference to the history of that divorce, which exhibits not only the weakness and fickleness of Henry, but also, in a much more marked degree, the intrigues and duplicity of the papal hierarchy.

Cardinal Wolsey, mortified by his failure to secure the papal chair, determined to wreak his vengeance on the Emperor Charles V., who had deserted him, and had given his influence to his rival. Accordingly, he sets to work to sever the tie that bound the two

kingdoms together. "They intrigue to keep me in the second rank," he said. "Very well, I will create such a rupture and confusion as the world has not witnessed for centuries." He had also another motive. Catherine of Aragon had chided him for his immorality and vicious life, and he had long meditated revenge. By one fell stroke he will take vengeance on both Catherine and Charles. He will prevail upon Henry to have Catherine divorced, and thus destroy the alliance.

The idea of divorcing Catherine of Aragon originated with Wolsey and not with Henry. He boasted of this to the French ambassador. "I planned and instigated the divorce," he said, "to bring about a lasting separation between the houses of England and Burgundy." The most reliable writers of that period, of both parties, agree in making Wolsey the author and instigator of the divorce. It is affirmed by Cardinal Pole, Tyndale, Sanders, Pallavicini, Roper, and others.

Henry before his marriage declined to be bound by an engagement made by his father during his minority. His conscience revolted. It was against the law of the Church, and, as he believed, against the law of God. He had read in the New Testament that John the Baptist had told Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife. And Catherine of Aragon had been married to Arthur, Henry's elder brother, now deceased. On the death of Prince Arthur, Henry VII., anxious to retain Catherine's large dowry, and to secure against her marrying any rival, pro-

posed that she should be betrothed to his second son, Henry, who was now proclaimed heir of the kingdom. It was against the law of the Church; and the Archbishop of Canterbury declared against the proposal. The Bishop of Winchester, however, suggested that a dispensation from the pope might be obtained. So Pope Julius II., in December, 1503, granted a dispensation permitting the marriage, "for the sake of preserving union between the Catholic princes." Henry and Catherine were betrothed, but not married, he being only in his thirteenth year.

The nation complained, and declared that no dispensation of the pope could make legal that which the law of God prohibited. Henry VII. shortly after took seriously ill, and the dread messenger, death, bore off his queen. He looked upon these visitations as judgments from heaven, on account of the violation of the divine law. Young Henry, on the day before he attained his majority, 27th June, 1505, formally protested against the engagement, and declared that he could not entertain the thought of marrying Catherine without violating his conscience. In his younger days Henry was conscientious and generous, although in after years he became unfeeling and cruel.

On ascending the throne on the death of his father, four years afterwards, he still adhered to his previous decision. Bishops and councillors, however, prevailed over his scruples. They had two powerful arguments. First, if she should marry a rival, and take with her the Spanish Alliance and her marriage dowry, the

crown of England might soon be removed from his head. Secondly, would he be more scrupulous than his holiness the pope, who had granted a dispensation? Henry yielded, and the marriage was celebrated on the 11th of June, 1509.

Seventeen years have passed away, and the king and his queen lived on the happiest terms with each other. Erasmus, so frequently the guest of Henry during these years, repeatedly speaks of their home-life as a pattern of domestic virtue and happiness. And Wolsey, for the sole purpose of taking vengeance on Charles, now steps in to create a breach and secure a separation. It was the passion of Cardinal Wolsey for power, and not the passion of Henry for Anne Boleyn, that was the prime factor in the proceedings that culminated in the divorce of Catherine.

Events had happened which paved the way for Wolsey's daring proposal. Henry had no son, and all of his children had died in infancy except Mary, who afterwards came to the throne, and is known by the unenviable sobriquet of "Bloody Mary." The queen was inconsolable on account of the death of her children. She would rise at midnight and kneel upon the cold stones to implore the Divine mercy. Henry saw in the death of his children a manifest mark of God's displeasure. Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, had never admitted the validity of the marriage. Now Longland, the king's chaplain and confessor, declared against it. Now is Wolsey's time. He waits upon the king, reminds him of his former scruples—"The

holiness of your life, the salvation of your soul, and the legitimacy of your children are in peril." "Good father," replied the king, "consider well the weight of the stone you would attempt to remove. The queen is a woman of such exemplary life that I can have no just motive to desire a separation."

The determined Wolsey, nothing daunted, returns in three days in company with the Bishop of Lincoln. They implore the king to submit the matter to competent judges. Henry yielded, and appointed Fox, one of his chaplains, Pace, Dean of St. Paul's, and Wakefield, an Oxford professor, to study the Levitical law on the subject. Three of the most distinguished bishops of the realm united in declaring his marriage unlawful. His favourite author, Thomas Aquinas, did the same. Henry read for himself in Leviticus xx. 21, "If a man shall take his brother's wife it is an unclean thing; . . . they shall be childless," and was greatly alarmed, as he had no heir. Such were the influences brought to bear upon Henry, and, to quote his own words, his mind was agitated with horror and alarm, and he gave way to melancholy. These events preceded by a considerable period Henry's passion for Anne Boleyn. In fact, during these preliminary negotiations she was not at Henry's court, not even in England.

The Roman Catholic Church has persistently charged Henry with all manner of unworthy motives in seeking to divorce Catherine, whereas the blame has to be laid at the door of the Church itself. Cardinal Wolsey

conceived the idea, persistently pressed Henry to entertain it, prevailed upon him to appeal to learned doctors and Scripture for guidance in the matter, convinced him that his marriage with his brother's wife was contrary to the law of God, and that his soul's salvation depended upon a separation; and further, that God was displeased with him, and smote down his infant children that he might have no heir from this unholy union. Henry's passion for Anne Boleyn was subsequent to all this. The dignitaries of the Church declared his marriage illegal; the necessary steps for securing a separation were being taken. The pope, Clement VII., had promised to grant a decretal sanctioning the divorce, but, through fear of Charles V., Catherine's nephew, he contrived to put off the evil day, as he regarded it, as long as possible. Wolsey also in August, 1527, sought for Henry the hand of the Princess Renée, daughter of Louis XII. of France. This was more than a year after Wolsey had prevailed upon Henry that a separation must take place between him and Catherine. So far, therefore, as Henry was concerned, the order of the motives for a separation were, first, conscientious scruples, entertained long before his first marriage, which were first removed by the dignitaries of the Church and the dispensation of the pope to further their own ends, and afterwards revived for the same purpose; secondly, desire for an heir to secure the safety of the kingdom, and the permanency of the throne; and lastly, but not until the divorce was promised by the pope, his love for Anne Boleyn.

In justice to Anne Boleyn, it must be said that it was not until the pope had granted the decree for the divorce—although he recalled it before it reached England—that she could be persuaded to become queen of England. It was only when she saw the Church prepared to pronounce the divorce, that she allowed herself to entertain the thought of becoming Henry's wife. Therefore, for whatever stain these tragical occurrences have left upon the throne of England the Roman Catholic Church is primarily responsible. Except for the Church, Henry never would have married his brother's wife; and except for the Church he would never have divorced her.

The pope's nuncio arrived in England, bringing with him the decretal pronouncing the divorce, but with positive instructions to keep it secret, and in no case to let it out of his own hands. Campeggio sought first to prevail upon Catherine to enter a nunnery. This plot failed. Then he endeavoured to persuade the king to abandon the idea of the divorce. Then, when the king charged the pope with duplicity and false dealing, the nuncio read to him the decretal of the pope pronouncing the divorce, and showed it to him, without, however, letting it out of his hands. "Craft and delay" were the nuncio's orders. The pope wished to gain time to see how it would fare with the Emperor Charles. If Charles was defeated the pope would side with Henry; but if the armies of Charles were successful the pope would not dare to oppose his will. It was not a matter of religion or of right with

the pope ; the motives that regulated his action were purely political.

The king and the nation were now convinced that the pope had been acting a double part, and the trick filled the king with utter disgust. The pope was no longer a spiritual ruler, but a crafty, designing politician ; and as such he must be dealt with.

Wolsey cherished an undying hatred against the Boleyns, and knowing also that Anne had inbibed the doctrines of the reformers, he, during the later stages of the case, privately advised the pope to withhold the decree of divorce, while in England he advocated it. The reason given to the pope for his change of opinion was that "if Henry was divorced from Catherine a friend of the reformers would become queen of England." Wolsey's letter to the pope was laid before the king ; and from that day Wolsey's fate was sealed, and all England was disgusted with the treachery and perfidy of Rome. Nearly all the bishops, and peers, and the councillors were in favour of the separation, declaring that the marriage was illegal, seeing that the law of God could not be set aside by the dispensation previously obtained from Julius II. And yet a spiteful cardinal who first suggested the separation, in order to have vengeance on Charles for refusing to assist him in his candidature for the papal chair, now seeks to prevent it in order to strike a blow at the Boleyns and reformers. Such is Rome—crafty, designing, perfidious, seeking only power over men,

and caring nothing for truth, and honour, and righteousness.

Wolsey, having lost the king's favour, foresaw his own speedy fall. So he professed to have become tired of managing the affairs of State, and with a false show of piety and humility, he professed a desire to return to his Episcopal duties in the diocese of York. False at heart, full of craft and cunning, possessing marvellous ability and consummate tact for carrying out his sinister designs, inflated with pride and ambition, he was feared and hated by all the king's councillors, and his exposure and fall were hailed with rapturous delight. Eventually arrested for high treason in conspiring to hand over England to the pope, before his trial came off he died on 29th November, 1530. Shortly before his death, addressing the governor of the Tower, he passed his own verdict upon his life and its deserts: "Master Kingston, if I had served my God as diligently as I have served the king, He would not have thus forsaken me in my grey hairs;" and then, conscience reigning supreme, as he stood upon the verge of eternity, he added, "*but this is my just reward.*" Such was the terrible end of the highest dignitary of the Romish Church in England. His fall was the presage of the fall of Rome and the rise of the Reformation.

No sooner have the king and nation got rid of the perfidious Wolsey, than a new star is announced. This was Thomas Cranmer, a Cambridge doctor. He had for several years made the Scriptures his special study.

At forty years of age he was doctor of divinity, university preacher, and examiner of candidates for holy orders. He was accustomed to direct the candidates for the ministry to study the Scriptures, and to accept them as their only rule of faith. Henry's secretary and chaplain, having met him at a friend's house, asked his opinion about the divorce. He had been recently appointed on the commission to investigate the matter from the standpoint of Scripture. His answer was clear and unambiguous,—“The question is, What says the Word of God? If God has declared such a marriage bad, the pope has no power to pronounce it good. When God has spoken, man is bound to obey. The Word of God is superior to the Church and the pope.” The secretary informed the king that Dr. Cranmer maintained that the Bible should be the sole authority to decide the matter. Cranmer, who shrank from publicity, was a gentle and timid man, but frank, and candid, and honourable. When asked to appear before the king, he pleaded to be excused. However, the king had him brought into his presence, and commissioned him to employ all his skill and learning in investigating the subject, adding, “All I wish to know is, whether or not my marriage is contrary to the law of God.” The king commanded Anne Boleyn's father to take Cranmer to his house until he had completed his report. Thus Cranmer, who was destined to do so much for the Reformation in after days, was, in God's good providence, brought into close contact with Anne Boleyn, who was soon to

be queen of England, a friend of the reformers, and the mother of good Queen Elizabeth, who confirmed and consolidated the Protestant Church of the Reformation. Anne Boleyn had already been taught to love the Word of God, by Margaret of Valois. She had also read with pleasure and profit Tyndale's book, "The Obedience of a Christian Man," and had commended it to the king, who read it with great interest. Cranmer lost no opportunity in instructing Anne Boleyn in the precious truths of the Gospel, and the good seed of the Word was soon to bring forth a rich harvest of fruit. Thus, at every point and turn in the path that led to the glorious Reformation, we see the Word of God made prominent. The work was not man's, but God's.

Thomas Cromwell, a man of great courage and capacity, also did signal service in convincing the king of the necessity of breaking with Rome. On being presented to the king, he said, "The pope refuses your request. But why do you ask his consent? Ought an Italian bishop to share your power, and place himself above the king of England? The pope's bishops and cardinals make oath to your majesty, and then make another oath to the pope absolving them from their oath to you. Sir, you are but half a king, and we are but half your subjects. Throw off the yoke of Rome, like Frederick and other German princes. Become once more a king, and govern your kingdom by the advice of your Lords and Commons . . . Now is the moment to act. Put confidence in

your Parliament. Proclaim yourself the head of the Church in England. Then shall your glory be increased, and the prosperity of your people be insured." This speech greatly impressed the king. The independence and prosperity of the monarchy were in jeopardy.

Cromwell drew from his pocket a copy of the oath the bishops make to the pope, and presented it to the king. From that moment Henry determined to treat the pope as an ambitious and designing despot, for daring to claim superior power to him even in his own kingdom. England from that day was virtually set free from the shackles of popery, by which she had been bound for centuries. This was on 2nd November, 1529.

Parliament had not assembled for seven years, Wolsey having administered the affairs of State. The reform of the Church brought with it the reform of the State, and established the rights of the people; for Henry, having cast off Wolsey, felt the necessity of consulting Parliament on the important steps that he was about to take. Thus civil and religious liberty went hand in hand. So soon as the power of Rome was broken, the people began to enjoy their rights.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FINAL BREACH WITH ROME.

“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”—REV. xviii. 2.

NOWHERE in Christendom were the many phases of the struggle between the reformed religion and the papacy so fully manifested as in Great Britain. In Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Italy, and France the Word of God and spiritual life had taken the place of papal bulls and empty ceremonies, but the personal struggle with the pope was in a great measure reserved for England. To superficial observers the contest between the court of England and the court of Rome may seem to have been to a large extent simply personal and political, but the profound and reverent student of history can see great spiritual issues as the consequence of this protracted struggle.

The Word of God faithfully preached and diligently read, had accomplished great things at the universities and among the common people; but the king and his councillors and the nobles were to be reached by other

methods. Custom and antiquity have a greater hold upon the aristocracy than upon the common people. They require the stern logic of facts to convince them of the necessity of change. A contest with the pope was necessary to bring out in bold relief the craft and duplicity of the weak, erring mortal who claimed to be lord of the conscience, the head of the Church, and the vicar of Christ on earth. All kings and potentates were required to bow to his infallible will on the peril of their soul's salvation, and for the security of their throne. To destroy this superstitious reverence for the pope, he must be exhibited before the eyes of kings and princes in his true light, as a mocker and deceiver, and a monster of iniquity. Worldly-minded kings paid no attention to the inner life of the papacy under ordinary circumstances; and, ignorant of the corruptions of Rome, they could not be persuaded to join in any movement for the reformation and regeneration of the Church. But, now that the time to favour Zion has come, God, in His providence, will compel Henry VIII. to study the papacy, that he may see for himself the rottenness of that system which the reformers were labouring to uproot and destroy. To prepare the king for setting himself free from the coils of the serpent that had charmed him and others by its cunning, he must first be bitten by that serpent and feel the force of its fangs.

The divorce, therefore, was not important in itself. It was important only as it prolonged and intensified a contest which so exposed the hollowness and false-

ness of the Romish hierarchy, that the English king and the English people were convinced that the pope had no claim to be regarded as the vicar of Christ, and the head of the Church, and the dispenser of salvation. The negotiations for the divorce proved to be the best possible means of holding up before Henry's eyes the intrigues of the Roman court, until he was convinced that the pope, who claimed to be superior to kings, was weaker morally than the weakest of men. But the divorce was not the cause of the Reformation. It simply kept the king's gaze fixed upon the corruptions of Rome until his superstitious regard for ancient customs was overcome—until he saw that the pretensions of Rome were an innovation upon the ancient rights of English kings.

Nor was this all. These negotiations were the means of directing Henry to the Word of God. Baffled by the pope, he was pleased to find the Word of God pointing in the same direction as his own desires: Previously he had placed the word of the pope above the Word of God, like a good Catholic. Now the pope's authority is brought down, and the Word of God gets its rightful place. Thomas Cromwell taught the king to respect himself and no longer bow to the authority of the pope. Thomas Cranmer taught him to respect the Word of God, and take it as the only rule of faith and practice. Thus these two noble men broke both arms of the papacy at a single blow; and the king and his kingdom were delivered

from the strong arm that had so long held them in bondage.

Dr. Cranmer said, "Let the Word of God settle the king's matter." But who shall interpret the Word of God? "The universities," was Cranmer's reply "Let the matter be laid before the professors of divinity." Now the pope is to keep silence and the Word of God is to speak. See what a mighty principle was here laid down! Previously the final appeal was to the pope. Now there is an appeal from the pope to the Word of God. God's Word is to have free course and be glorified. The much-neglected Scriptures are to be restored to their rightful place. The king and his councillors are prepared by current events to have the laws of God set up in the realm instead of the laws of the pope. An unenlightened piety may see nothing but personal and political motives in all this controversy; but the well-instructed Christian will see God's guiding hand at every point in the proceedings, and be led to adore the wisdom and power that can make even the intrigues and dark designs of men a means of carrying out His all-wise and gracious purposes.

The papacy for centuries had oppressed the consciences of Christians, and had denied them the right of interpreting the law of God for themselves. But this appeal from the pope to the law of God virtually declared that hereafter the authority of the pope must bow before Scripture interpreted by an enlightened conscience. The reformers claimed that Christ should be recognised as the Head of the Church, and the

Scriptures set up as the laws of the Church; and a great point was gained when Henry and his council threw off the authority of Rome. It was a step in the right direction. The fetters that enslaved the conscience were thereby snapped asunder. The further steps necessary to complete the work of reformation were to have men's consciences enlightened by the Word of God, and their hearts regenerated by the Spirit of God.

Henry and his council, to their great commendation, go deliberately to work. The matter of the legality of the king's marriage with his brother's wife is submitted to the universities, with the injunction that the king sought to know only the mind of God as revealed in His Holy Word. The universities were unanimous in declaring the marriage contrary to the law of God. In this they agreed with the teaching of the Church in all ages. And still, as if to guard against any undue haste in a matter of such moment, a deputation, consisting of Dr. Cranmer, Dr. Bennet, Dr. Stokesley, Bishop of London, the Earl of Wiltshire, and other scholars, was sent to the pope to argue the matter before him from the standpoint of Scripture. A day was appointed for the disputation, but no one appeared to oppose the English deputies, their case being thus admitted to be unassailable. Dr. Cranmer also appeared before the Emperor Charles to debate the matter, and with a similar result. On all hands the case is admitted. Henry is pronounced by all the scholars of Europe to have contracted an

illegal marriage, against which he himself had protested when he attained his majority. The pope persistently refuses to liberate him, through fear of the Emperor. Therefore, what is to be done? There is nothing else for it but to ignore the pope, and follow the Word of God as interpreted by learned men and the consent of the Universal Church.

During these events, Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had never consented to the marriage, died; and on his return Cranmer was appointed to the see of Canterbury. For five years the king's case had "dragged its slow length along." The pope had temporized all this time. By promises which he never intended to fulfil, he sought to conciliate Henry and gain time. When pressed, he signed a decree sanctioning the divorce, and then issued instructions to his nuncio, charging him under no circumstances to give effect to the decree. Henry even submitted to the indignity of being summoned before the pope's tribunal, consisting of two of his own subjects, for a decision of the case, only to be mocked; and, after repeated adjournments, to have the case postponed indefinitely.

The patience of the nation became exhausted before the patience of the king, and both Parliament and people called upon Henry to ignore the pope, to deny his supremacy and his right to control the affairs of the kingdom, and to entrust the whole matter to his bishops and Parliament. Henry yielded. Archbishop Cranmer pronounced the decree of divorce in

1532. Parliament assembled, and declared the king to be the head of the Church, and "by the whole consent of the House of Parliament, the pope's supremacy was utterly abolished out of this realm of England for ever;" and all were commanded to call him "pope" no more, but "bishop of Rome."

Thus ended the supremacy of the pope in England. But that was not the Reformation, although it was an important step towards it, by removing a mighty barrier out of the way. To depose the pope and set up a Catholic king as head of the Church, was not a reformation in itself, but only a change. A truly reformed and Scriptural Church must acknowledge only Christ as its Head, and the Word of God as the only rule of faith and life. Henry, however, was still a Catholic in doctrine and in ritual. He had obtained the title of "Defender of the Faith" by writing a book against the doctrines of Luther; and as the reformers in England held the principal doctrines of Luther, having found them in the Bible where Luther found them, Henry had no sympathy with them, and even permitted and sanctioned severe persecutions against them. And although he had rejected the supremacy of the pope, he was not prepared to recognise the supremacy of Christ and the sole authority of the Scriptures.

The great task of reforming the numerous abuses in the Church was begun by Parliament, and not by the king; but was completed by the Word of God, and sealed by the blood of the martyrs.

The Parliament of 1529, sometimes referred to as the first Protestant Parliament in England, made a bold step towards reformation. They manfully attacked the avaricious practices of the clergy—their fines and fees—without touching upon doctrine. The stand taken by Parliament compelled the bishops in self-defence to hold a Convocation of the province of Canterbury, in order to reform the most scandalous abuses, especially in the lives of the clergy.

On 12th November it was decreed that the priests should be forbidden to keep shops or taverns, play at dice, pass the night in houses of evil repute, or go about with sporting dogs and birds of prey, and other unmentionable vices. These stringent laws were passed by Convocation, being rendered necessary by the scandalous lives of the clergy.

The need of reform was recognised on all hands. It was thought possible to reform the Romish Church *in* the land. However, it was eventually discovered that the only possible reformation was to reform it *off* the land, and set up a Scriptural Church in its place. But this work was reserved for another than Henry VIII. The Bible was still a proscribed book. Latimer and others pleaded for the free circulation of the Scriptures among the people in English. Henry replied that the teaching of the priests was quite enough for the people, adding that “he would consider the question of giving the Bible to his subjects when they renounced the arrogant pretension of interpreting it according to their own fancies.” For the single offence of possessing

and circulating the Scriptures in English, Bilney, Bayfield, Bainham, Tewksbury, John Fryth, Andrew Hewet, Thomas Bennet, and many others, perished in the fires of Smithfield from 1531 to 1534. In 1536, William Tyndale, the translator of the Scriptures, and in 1538 John Lambert, a distinguished scholar, also sealed their testimony with their blood. Thus while Henry was resisting the pope with the one hand, he was smiting down the Reformation worthies with the other. The most active preachers were compelled to seek refuge in a foreign land, while many were thrown into prison. Cranmer and Latimer and others, who were in high favour with the king, saved themselves by a studied moderation.

In 1540, seven years after his divorce from Rome, Henry summoned a Parliament, also a synod of all the archbishops, bishops, and learned doctors, to discuss certain matters touching religion in the realm. Certain resolutions, known as the Six Articles, were adopted and decreed by this Convocation, and were approved by the king.

The first article set forth the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation without any modification. "The natural body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as conceived by the Virgin Mary," was declared to be truly present under the form of bread and wine; and that after consecration there remained no substance of bread and wine, but the substance of Christ, God and man.

The second article declared that communion in both

kinds was not necessary—that is, the cup would still be withheld from the laity.

The third article declared that priests, after taking orders, might not marry by the law of God.

The fourth article set forth the Roman vows of chastity and widowhood.

The fifth article acknowledged private masses for the dead as agreeable to God's law.

The sixth article enjoined auricular confession as expedient and necessary, and that it ought to be retained and continued in the Church of God.

It is clear, therefore, that although the Church in England had been cut adrift from the Pope, it was still at sea so far as sound doctrine was concerned. Archbishop Cranmer was the only one in the Assembly that opposed these articles. The rest, knowing the king's pleasure, lacked courage to oppose his will. Thus the articles were passed ; and all subjects, under pain of death by burning and forfeiture of all their goods and estates, were enjoined to observe them, and in no way, by word or writing, to publish any contrary opinion. During the four years that Anne Boleyn was queen of England, her love for the reformed doctrine may have restrained the king. But after she was beheaded in 1536, and especially after the Six Articles became law in 1540, persecution raged.

The first step in the reformation and transformation of England was originated by Thomas Cromwell, and carried out by Parliament, in declaring against the supremacy of the pope. The second step was suggested

by Cranmer, in setting up the supreme authority of Scripture. But a third step had yet to be taken. There must be not only reformation, but regeneration. There must be spiritual life. This is the final step; and, alas! it has to be taken in blood. The true representatives of the Reformation are to be found in the martyrs, who recognised Christ as the only Head of the Church, and yielded up their lives at the stake, crying, "None but Christ, none but Christ." As the negotiations with the pope had disgusted the nation with the papacy, so the cruel deaths of so many godly men, and their sweet forgiving spirit and triumph in the flames, disgusted the people with persecution; and they became convinced of the power and preciousness of God's Word and Spirit.

Henry VIII. was in no sense the father of the Reformed Protestant Church in England. He lived and died in the Catholic faith, although he disowned the pope's authority. At his death he left £600 a year to the Church of Windsor, for the priests to say masses every day for his soul. Had he embraced the true doctrine of the Reformation, it would have reformed and regenerated him, as it reformed and regenerated the Church after his death; and history would never have had to record that a king of England had fallen so low, and had become so brutal, as to behead two wives, and put aside another, and marry a fourth, in the short space of six years.

In 1541, Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, a ferocious tyrant, prevailed upon the king, by wicked counsel, to

institute a persecution under the Six Articles recently passed into law. So great was the number arrested for professing Christ's Gospel and possessing the Scriptures, that all the prisons in London were too small to contain them. John Porter, for the simple offence of reading aloud from the Bible in St Paul's, placed there by the order of Bonner, the Bishop of London, with the consent of the king, was sent to Newgate, heavily fettered with irons, and fastened to the wall of the dungeon by a collar of iron around his neck. He was so inhumanly treated that he died in a few days. Anthony Pearson was burned in 1543 for preaching against the sacrifice of the mass. Dr Haynes was arrested for preaching against holy bread and holy water. Even Cromwell, who had been of such immense service to the king and the nation, but who was in cordial sympathy with the reformers, was beheaded in July, 1541.

The Parliament of 1544 revised and modified the Six Articles, but still persecution raged all the days of Henry VIII. Within a few months of his death, in June, 1546, Anne Askew and four others sealed their testimony with their blood in the fires of Smithfield. Anne Askew was a noble lady of culture and refinement. She refused to believe that private masses relieved or benefited the souls of the departed, and taught the Scriptures to those about her; and because she did this she must die. On the day of her execution she was brought to Smithfield, and was bound with a chain to the stake, in company with others.


With great Christian constancy she triumphed in the flames, and exhorted her companions to be steadfast to the end.

In January, 1547, Henry VIII. died, and the Church had rest for a time, during the reign of his son, Edward VI. Henry left behind him three children—Mary, by Catherine of Aragon; Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn; and Edward, by Lady Jane Seymour. He was survived by his sixth wife, Catherine Parr.

CHAPTER X.

EDWARD VI. AND THE REFORMATION.

“See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.”—HEB. viii. 5.

N the death of Henry VIII., his only son, Edward VI., ascended the throne before he was ten years of age, in January, 1547. He was a most accomplished and pious prince, and was thoroughly in sympathy with the reformers. During Edward's minority the Duke of Somerset, who also belonged to the Protestant and reforming party, was appointed protector of the kingdom. Now a golden era for the Church is about to be inaugurated, although in a short time the good work is to be interrupted by terrible trials and bitter persecution. The young king was early imbued with a profound reverence for the Word of God. On one occasion he showed marked displeasure with a person who stood upon a Bible in order to reach something on a shelf. His piety was deep and sincere, and far removed from superstition. He was endowed with brilliant gifts, and made most astonishing progress in learning. At eight years of age he wrote Latin letters to the king, and Queen Catherine Parr, and to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Great hopes were entertained of him, and had not his life been cut short, he would have left behind him a splendid monument in a thoroughly reformed and Scriptural Church, built upon the apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. As it was, his reign was fraught with untold blessing to the Church and nation.

Archbishop Cranmer, now set free from the imperious will of Henry, zealously undertook the work of reformation. Although cordially supported by the king, the protector, and the council, the task proved to be a most formidable one. Many of the bishops and most of the clergy, who were very ignorant, had a strong leaning towards the old religion with its superstitious rites and ceremonies. It has always been true of the Roman Catholic Church that "ignorance is the mother of devotion." So soon as men become enlightened, and have courage to think for themselves, they soon part company with the meaningless and superstitious ceremonies of Rome. But where there is ignorance there will be a clinging to the old forms of worship, and perfect contentment with corrupt and unscriptural doctrine. Cranmer and the reformers had to contend with this ignorance. The inferior clergy were totally unfit for instructing and preaching to the people. Hence they deprecated a change for which they were not qualified. This evil was intensified and perpetuated by the action of Henry VIII. When he suppressed the monasteries, he granted to the monks pensions for life. These pensions eventually

took the form of benefices in the gift of the Crown. Thus it came to pass that a great majority of the livings were held by ignorant and dissolute monks, who were totally unfit for conducting a reformed service, and who were also too indolent to qualify themselves for the new state of things. Although personally their living was of more account to them than their religion, still at heart they resisted the change brought about by the Reformation.

Cranmer at once sought to remedy this evil. With the consent of the council he placed in the chairs of divinity in the universities learned Protestant divines from Germany. This wise and timely measure soon secured a plentiful supply of earnest and capable young preachers. In the meantime, however, it was found necessary to send out a number of itinerant preachers to those districts and churches whose clergy were most ignorant and superstitious.

In order to enable the clergy to instruct the people in the fundamental truths of the Gospel, a book of homilies was drawn up and appointed to be read by the clergy. Prominence was given in these homilies to the Gospel plan of salvation through simple faith in the finished work of Christ; and the people were enjoined to lead godly lives according to the rules laid down in the Word of God. Erasmus' New Testament was translated into English, and ordered to be set up in every church. The council possessed plenary powers during Edward's minority, and they determined to reform abuses and set up a purer and simpler wor-

ship. Cranmer resolved to proceed by degrees, and to give reasons for every change, in order, as he hoped, to prevent opposition. Several of the bishops—Bonner of London, Gardiner of Winchester, and Tonsal of Durham—were opposed to all change; but Cranmer had the young king, the protector, Ridley, Bishop of Rochester, and Latimer on his side.

A general visitation of all the dioceses in the kingdom was resolved upon, in order to ascertain the true state of religion and the needs of the people, as well as the fitness of the clergy for their duties. The great hindrance to the spread of the Gospel was found to be the want of capable preachers. The Reformation was, for this reason, making slow progress in many parts of the country, especially where ignorant and fanatical priests inveighed against the new order of things. The injunctions made by Lord Cromwell in Henry's time, but never enforced, were re-enacted. Images were to be removed from the churches, and all customs abused to superstition were to be abolished. The Scriptures were to be read and the litany said in English. The clergy were enjoined to preach sermons for the instruction of the people, to catechise, to visit the sick, and to lead exemplary lives. The Lord's Day was to be strictly observed, and wholly spent in the worship and service of God, in the duties of religion, or in deeds of charity, instead of spending the day, after attending mass in the morning, in pleasure, and gambling, and drunkenness, as was the general custom. The bishops were enjoined to ordain to the office of the ministry

only such as were duly qualified to preach. In Henry's time, the prayers for the dead implied a purgatory, now the prayer for departed souls asked only for the consummation of their happiness at the last day,—thus dealing a death-blow to purgatory.

The visitation was proceeded with as rapidly as possible, and everywhere images were removed and superstitious practices and ceremonies were abolished.

Bonner protested and refused to conform, but afterwards yielded to the authority of the council. Gardiner refused to receive the Book of Homilies, because it taught that the sacraments and rites of the Church did not justify, but the merits of Christ alone, received and appropriated by personal faith on the part of the recipient. Parliament repealed the Six Articles and the Acts of previous reigns against the Lollards. It was made a punishable offence to deny the supremacy of the king, or to assert the supremacy of the pope. It was ordained that, in the Lord's Supper, the laity should receive the cup as well as the bread, and that the people should always communicate with the priest. Thus private masses were abolished. A great abuse had gradually crept into the Church. Persons who did not attend the Sacrament of the Supper were enjoined to give their offerings, and were led to believe that the priests received it in their stead. This practice gave rise to masses for the dead on the payment of certain sums of money. All of these abuses were now swept away.

In February, 1549, an Act was passed permitting

the clergy to marry—a privilege denied to priests since the eleventh century. Gregory the Great, in endeavouring to found a new ecclesiastical empire, judged that unmarried men would be his best servants, as the married clergy in his time had to take an oath of allegiance to the State. Hence celibacy was imposed upon the clergy. Cranmer procured an order of council which prohibited carrying candles on Candlemas Day, ashes on Ash Wednesday, and palms on Palm Sunday.

Cranmer and Ridley, in the year 1549, compiled the liturgy, and three years later drew up forty-two Articles of Belief. On the basis of these, the Convocation of London in 1562 adopted thirty-nine Articles as a Confession of Faith, and a liturgical directory for the English Church. Both were combined under the title of the Book of Common Prayer, and were incorporated in the Statutes as a part of the laws of the realm during the reign of Elizabeth in 1571. The reform in ritual was not so thorough in England as in other countries. A copious ceremonial was retained. Kneeling at the sacrament was allowed to continue, although a rubric was added guarding against the idea that the adoration of the host was signified by the act. The liturgy was intended to be a medium between the pomp of Roman Catholicism and a plain Scriptural simplicity, as a kind of compromise between the two extreme parties in the Church. For the same reason, Episcopacy and Apostolical Succession were retained, although they had no sanction from Scripture. In

order to gain the clergy and the people, it was resolved to retain all forms and practices that had not been abused to superstition and idolatry. Not the least important of the reforms was the enactment that the whole service should be conducted in the language of the people, and in a distinct and audible voice.

Altars were removed from the churches. Auricular confession and priestly absolution were abolished. The sign of the cross in baptism, and in the consecration of the sacramental elements, was retained, although the elevation and adoration of the host were forbidden. The elevation of the host—that is, the lifting up the communion elements in the presence of the people that they might adore them as being very God—was originally introduced into the service to set forth the lifting up of Christ on the Cross; but the practice gradually led to the adoration of the wafer. This idolatrous act was therefore prohibited.

The reform in the communion service was brought about principally through the influence and firmness of the distinguished Scottish Reformer, John Knox. He was at this time resident in England, and one of the king's chaplains. He was in high favour with the king and Archbishop Cranmer, and was offered a bishopric. This honour, however, he courteously but firmly declined, for two reasons—first, because the episcopal office had no sanction in Scripture; and, secondly, he could not conscientiously conform to the liturgy, as some of the superstitious ceremonies had been retained, such as the sign of the cross and

anointing in baptism and confirmation, kneeling at the sacrament, and genuflexions. He also claimed that ministers ought to have authority to exclude the unworthy and profane from the Lord's table. As king's chaplain and itinerant preacher, he was not bound to conform to the entire liturgy. Absolute conformity was not pressed upon ministers in the time of Edward. The liturgy was intended, like the Book of Homilies, as a help merely to the less capable of the clergy, who had not the gift of free prayer and preaching. Strict conformity was not insisted upon until the time of Elizabeth. Hence, Knox was free to exercise his gifts in preaching, and his influence in reforming the service and creed of the Church. The Church of the Reformation in England owes much more to the wisdom and firmness and courage of Knox than modern Churchmen are willing to concede.

In the year 1551, he was consulted by Cranmer and Ridley in the revision of the Book of Common Prayer. The English reformers did not think it expedient to go the whole length of reducing the service to the simplicity of the Scriptural model, as Knox desired, fearing the opposition such a course might evoke among those who had been accustomed to a gorgeous ritual. However, Knox's influence secured the abolition of the sacrifice of the mass, the corporal presence of Christ in the sacrament, the elevation and adoration of the host, and the use of the wafer. In his tract entitled "An Admonition to the Professors of the Truth in England," he refers to these reforms with

evident satisfaction. He says, "God gave boldness and knowledge to the Court of Parliament to take away the round-clipped god, wherein standeth all the holiness of the papists, and to command common bread to be used at the Lord's table; and also to take away the most part of superstitions (kneeling at the Lord's table excepted), which formerly profaned Christ's true religion." The papists among the clergy were greatly offended by these reforms, and attributed them to the influence of Knox. Dr. Weston, during the reign of Queen Mary, less than five years after the revision, in his disputation with Latimer, publicly attributed these reforms to the influence of Knox. His words are: "A runagate Scot did take away the adoration or worshipping of Christ in the sacrament, by whose procurement that heresy was put into the last communion book; so much prevailed that one man's authority at that time." Weston was a rank papist, and, of course, regarded the reform as heresy.

In October, 1552, Knox and the rest of the king's chaplains were directed to consider and revise the Forty-two Articles, drawn up by Cranmer, and report to the king. These Articles of Faith were approved by Parliament the same year. In the final revision of the Prayer-book, the opinion of Calvin was obtained, which concurred with the counsel of Knox and Bucer regarding the holy oil used in anointing at baptism, confirmation, and ordination, so that it was discontinued. The use of the cross in consecrating the com-

munion elements was also dispensed with. Prayers for the dead, and those expressions that seemed to favour the doctrine of transubstantiation, were struck out; and the Book of Common Prayer, substantially as it is at the present time, was ratified by Parliament in 1552.

In the communion service prepared in 1548, the words prescribed to be pronounced by the ministers were, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul into everlasting life," and "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul into everlasting life." In the revised service in 1552, this was changed so as to avoid the use of language that might be construed to teach the real bodily presence. The words to be used by the minister were, "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving,—Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful." These words set forth the true import of the ordinance as a loving commemoration of the Saviour's death, bearing out His own words, "This do in remembrance of Me." However, on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, who was not such a thorough reformer as Edward, the words of the old service were prefixed to the new—another attempt at compromise which pleased neither Catholics nor Protestants. This change sadly marred the service by introducing contradictory sentiments, one portion favouring the Roman Catholic dogma of

transubstantiation, the other setting forth the true Scriptural doctrine advocated by the reformers.

The strong popish party that existed in England made the Reformation of the Church a very difficult and delicate matter for the reformers. In their excessive desire to conciliate and win over the Catholic party, they thought it expedient to refrain from carrying out their own convictions in all matters of government, and doctrine, and worship. The leading reformers were opposed to vestments and all ritualistic ceremonies. Cranmer and his associates were not satisfied even with the last revision of the Prayer-book. He drew up another which was declared to be "an hundred times more perfect," but before it could be adopted the young king was called away, and the fanatical Mary sat upon the throne, so that further reform became impossible. Cranmer and Ridley also intended to have had an Act passed abolishing all sacerdotal vestments. They were also agreed with Knox and Calvin, and other Presbyterian divines, that the office of bishop was not a distinct order—that the Scriptural doctrine of Church government was not Episcopal but Presbyterian. Cranmer formally set forth his opinion in writing, declaring that "bishops and priests were one and the same, not two things, but both one office in the beginning of Christ's religion." Thirteen bishops, with a great number of divines, signed a declaration that "in the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only deacons or

ministers, presbyters or bishops." Bishop Hooper, under date 8th February, 1550, in a letter to Bullinger, the Swiss reformer, says: "The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of Rochester, Ely, St. David's, Lincoln, and Bath were sincerely bent on advancing the purity of doctrine, agreeing in all things with the Helvetic Churches." Latimer and Hooper both expressly maintained that by Divine institution bishops and presbyters are one and the same. Cranmer also proposed to establish courts similar to the kirk-sessions and presbyteries and synods shortly afterwards set up by Knox in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In the matter of Church discipline also, all the Protestant bishops and divines in the time of Edward were in favour of providing a tribunal, by which all unworthy persons might be excluded from the Lord's table. The courtiers, however, whose lives were such as to insure their being seriously affected by such a court, offered bitter opposition to the measure. Thus those noble men were hampered on every hand. The popish party stirring up open rebellion on one hand, and worldly-minded, immoral courtiers protesting against discipline on the other, the best intentions of the godly men who were carrying on the Reformation were in a large measure frustrated. They were hindered and retarded in their work, so that it was far from completed when the "Bloody Mary" came to the throne, and not only overthrew their work, but committed the greater portion of these noble reformers to the fires of Smithfield.

Edward VI. died on 6th July, 1553, amid the tears of a weeping and grateful nation. He was a prince of exemplary virtue and earnest piety—the wonder of his time, on account of his marvellous attainments in learning and in all matters pertaining to the kingdom, although only sixteen years of age. His reign extended over a period of only six years and a half, a period very short in time, but full of blessed deeds, and fraught with untold blessings to the Church and nation, and to the Reformation cause throughout the world.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MARTYRS IN THE REIGN OF MARY.

“These are they which have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”—REV. vii. 14.

THE short reign of Edward VI. was fraught with rich blessing to the English nation, and greatly advanced the cause of the Reformation. It was too short, however, to consolidate the kingdom and establish in the hearts of the nation the great principles advocated by the leading reformers. The more ignorant and superstitious among the clergy, and many of the people, still cherished a secret affection for the old state of things, and had no sympathy with the bishops and learned divines who were devoting all their energies to the purification of the Church. Many of the courtiers also, whose lives would not stand the test of discipline, became apprehensive lest the rigid measures of the reformers would bear heavily on their loose practices; and they, too, began to desire a religion which allowed them to indulge their appetites and passions, and yet promised them the favour of God and permitted them to enjoy the rites of the

Church. It thus became evident that there could be no true and abiding Reformation apart from personal regeneration. The papacy, therefore, was not killed as yet, it was only scotched; and it must be accorded a little space in order that it may be seen in its true colours, as no longer a spiritual Church, but an elaborately organised political engine aiming at the suppression of civil and religious liberty, denying the supreme authority of the Scriptures, and claiming for the pope absolute authority over the consciences of men. That the nation may return to allegiance to Christ, and be confirmed and established in its opposition to the papacy, the hell-hounds of persecution must be let loose, until the people are sickened by the blood of the martyrs, and turn away in bitter disgust from the inhuman and brutal deeds of Rome. Queen Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, narrow-minded, bigoted, superstitious, was a fitting agent to exhibit to the world the real character of Romish intolerance and fanaticism.

Shortly before his death, Edward, by the advice of his councillors, signed an instrument devolving the succession upon Lady Jane Grey, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, and grand-niece of Henry VIII. She was a lady of unblemished life and brilliant gifts, and had thoroughly mastered the Greek and Latin languages. On the death of Edward, the council acknowledged her queen. However, she at first refused to accept the crown, saying that of right it belonged to Mary or Elizabeth. But when she was

assured that the judges and privy councillors had declared that she was the legal heir, she yielded to their representations, and was proclaimed queen on the 9th of July, 1553. Twenty-one councillors subscribed to a letter addressed to Mary, informing her that Lady Jane was now queen, and that, as the marriage between her father and mother had been declared null by the high court of Parliament, she could not succeed to the throne. They also informed her that Edward, before his death, had excluded his sisters on account of the sentences passed in the ecclesiastical courts and confirmed by Parliament; and the next in the succession was Lady Jane Grey, whose right they had acknowledged, and who was prepared to uphold the true religion and the laws of the land. Lady Jane Grey was married to Lord Guildford Dudley, the Duke of Northumberland's son. The duke was very unpopular on account of the execution of the Duke of Somerset, and the suspicions that were whispered about him as being concerned in the death of Edward. Hence, when Mary asserted her claim, the Earl of Sussex and other opponents of the Duke of Northumberland raised forces on her behalf; and she, having promised not to alter the established religion, was proclaimed queen after a brief struggle of ten days with the supporters of Lady Jane Grey. Mary was supported by her cousin, the Emperor Charles, and, as Lady Jane was known to be in thorough sympathy with the Reformation, the Catholic party naturally preferred to see Mary seated upon the throne.

The Earl of Arundel and other nobles were determined to prevent the return of the Duke of Northumberland to power, and cast in their lot with Mary's party. Elizabeth, also, with a thousand cavalry, came to Mary's assistance. With scarcely any opposition she came to the throne, the council preferring to adopt her rule to that of Northumberland.

Mary was scarce securely seated upon the throne when her craft and cruelty began to be manifest. Notwithstanding her promise to the men of Suffolk to uphold the established religion, she wrote to Gardiner in her own hand, declaring her determination to burn every Protestant who would not return to the Catholic faith. Lady Jane Grey and her husband were committed to the Tower to await the day of execution. The Duke of Northumberland was offered a free pardon on condition that he would renounce his religion and attend mass. He promptly yielded, and even exhorted the people to return to the Romish faith. But in less than a month he lost his head. He died unpitied, on account of his ambition and his treachery towards Cromwell and Somerset, who had done so much to establish the Reformation.

On the 12th of August, Mary made a proclamation to the Lord Mayor and magistrates of London, declaring that she did not mean "to compel or strain the conscience" of any one in the matter of religion, except as they might be persuaded by the preaching of godly, virtuous, and learned preachers. But within a week she issued a royal proclamation retracting the

promise of toleration, and forbidding any one to preach or expound the Scriptures without the queen's special permission in writing. This proclamation was followed, as a matter of course, by the introduction of the Romish ritual into the majority of the churches.

On the 22nd of August, five weeks after Mary's accession, Sir Thomas Palmer and Sir John Gates were beheaded on Tower Hill, publicly professing their faith in the reformed religion. Thus her reign commenced as it ended, in shedding the blood of the faithful followers of Christ. The pope had lost no time in secretly advising Mary to exercise the supremacy conferred upon her as the head of the Church in England, in winning back the people to the Romish see. She immediately dismissed the Protestant bishops, and filled their places with rank Romanists. The fanatical and bloody Bonner was made Bishop of London, in place of Ridley; Gardiner was appointed Lord Chancellor and Bishop of Winchester; Day was made Bishop of Durham; Heath, Bishop of Worcester; Tonsal, Bishop of Chichester; Vesie, Bishop of Exeter; in the place of Miles Coverdale, the translator of the Scriptures. Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, and Ridley and Latimer were committed to prison. These changes greatly alarmed the reformers, for they indicated beyond the possibility of doubt the course the queen was determined to pursue. Gardiner was appointed, on 29th August, to license such preachers as met with his approval; all others were forbidden to preach. Many paid no heed to this interdict, but went on

preaching the Gospel as they had been accustomed to do. But everywhere Gardiner's preachers began to set up images in the churches, and revived the ritual and ceremonies of the Romish Church. The majority of the nation was Protestant, but they were powerless against the tyranny of the queen and the recently appointed bishops and preachers.

Many of the reformers seeing imminent danger ahead, without any hope of being useful to the cause of Christ in England, as they were forbidden to preach the Gospel, thought of retiring to the Continent. Cranmer approved of the suggestion as being in accordance with the teaching and practice of Christ Himself: "When they persecute you in one city flee ye to another." However, the archbishop himself refused to leave the country. When urged by anxious friends to flee from certain death, he nobly replied, "The post that I hold, and the part I have taken, require me to make a stand for the truths of Holy Scripture. I shall therefore undergo with constancy the loss of life rather than remove secretly from the realm." There were some grounds for hoping that Cranmer would not be proceeded against; for Mary could not have forgotten that by his intercession she was saved from the anger of her father, Henry VIII. He had, indeed, signed the document which excluded her from the succession, but he was the last to adhibit his name, and did so most reluctantly. However, a false report was circulated that the archbishop had set up the mass at Canterbury. This circumstance drew from him a

declaration, couched in very strong language denouncing the mass as a device and invention of the devil, and wholly contrary to Scripture, and containing many horrible abuses. He concluded by offering to defend "not only the common prayers of the Church, the ministrations of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies, but also all the doctrine and religion set out by King Edward VI., as being more pure and according to God's Word than any other that hath been used in England these thousand years."

This bold declaration afforded his enemies a plausible excuse for treating him as severely as others. Accordingly he was summoned to appear before the Council on the 7th of September, and boldly declared his intention of posting a similar document upon the door of St. Paul's and other churches in London, if time had permitted. No just case could be made out against this action, for he was simply defending the laws and established religion of the realm; for, as yet no contrary laws had been passed. However, he was summarily committed to the Tower during the queen's pleasure.

Mary's coronation took place on the 1st of October, and although the service of the mass was illegal, it was celebrated on the occasion. Bishop Gardiner, who was also Lord Chancellor, performed the act of coronation. The queen granted a general pardon, but expressly excepted the prisoners confined in the Tower, the Fleet, and sixty-two others. Grafton and Whitchurch were among the latter. They had committed

an offence wholly unpardonable in the eyes of a Roman Catholic queen. They had published the Bible in English—*that* and nothing more.

It was now abundantly evident that no mercy would be extended to any who refused to return to the Romish faith. Protestants of foreign birth received permission to leave the country, and about eight hundred English reformers left with them.

On the 20th of October, Parliament was assembled, and Mary commanded that a mass should be celebrated before the despatch of business. The service was contrary to the laws of the realm, but the queen had determined to begin as she intended to end. The Protestant Bishops had nearly all been deprived of their sees already, and now the Archbishop of York is committed to the Tower. There remained only two bishops opposed to the corruptions of Rome, Taylor and Harley; and Harley was not allowed to take his seat, because he was married. Bishop Taylor refused to kneel when the wafer-god was lifted up, and he was immediately expelled. Thus the tyrannical queen, by riding rough-shod over the laws of the realm, succeeded in excluding all the reformed bishops. By similar illegal means the House of Commons was packed with her partisans. All laws relating to religion, passed during Edward's reign, were repealed, not, however, without strenuous opposition in the Commons, many of the members arguing strongly for the continuance of the liturgy in English. These were in a minority, however, and it was enacted that

after the 20th of December, any other service than that in use at the death of Henry VIII. would be illegal. Another Act was passed by which any one attempting to interfere with the Romish service should be imprisoned for three months. During the same session an Act of attainder was passed against Lady Jane Grey, her husband, Archbishop Cranmer, Lord Ambrose, and others, by which their goods and estates were forfeited, and themselves deprived of the queen's protection. So far as Cranmer was concerned, this severe measure was probably intended, in the meantime, at least, only to disqualify him for retaining the see of Canterbury, and thereby prevent him from sitting in Parliament. Early in 1554 eleven new bishops and several deans, all rank papists, were appointed; so that within six months after Mary's accession she had removed all the leaders of the Reformation from office in the Church, and from the chairs in the universities.

On the 15th of January, Mary declared her intention of marrying a Catholic prince, Philip, the son of the Emperor Charles. On this becoming known, popular discontent was very great, and the country was threatened with civil war. The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Thomas Wyatt even undertook to raise the standard of rebellion. They were taken and beheaded, as was also Lady Jane Grey and her husband, although they took no part in the rebellion. The duke professed his faith on the scaffold: "I beseech you all to bear me witness, that I die in the faith of Christ, trusting to be saved by His blood only, and by

no other sacrifice ; for Christ died for me, and for all them that truly repent and steadfastly trust in Him.” On the 12th of February, Lady Jane and her husband were led out to execution. Her dying testimony was clear and decisive : “ Bear me witness, I beseech you, good friends, that I die a true Christian, and that I hope for salvation only through the blood of Jesus.” She met her cruel fate with noble fortitude and perfect resignation. Her last words were, “ Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” Fecknam, Abbot of Winchester, who was entrusted with the customary duty of preparing her for death, afterwards expressed his astonishment at her great knowledge, the extraordinary sense she had of the comforting and sustaining power of religion in the near prospect of death. She maintained, with great force of reasoning and profound knowledge of Scripture, the true reformed doctrines, although she was only seventeen years of age. Her beautiful life and brilliant talents made her the object of universal admiration.

Not satisfied with the blood of Lady Jane Grey, the cruel, jealous Mary committed her sister, Elizabeth, to the Tower. Knowing her great popularity with the Protestant party, she feared that on the arrival of Philip for the consummation of the marriage, the nation might again rise in rebellion, and so Elizabeth suffers ignominious treatment. The marriage took place on 25th July, 1554, at Winchester Cathedral ; and Philip, in order to gain popularity with the nation, immediately secured the release of Elizabeth. He

signally failed, however, in gaining the affections of the English people. He was of a reserved and sullen disposition, and arbitrary in his counsels and dealings. His Spanish attendants were insolent and overbearing. As a consequence of the marriage, Calais was lost to England; and the nation never forgave Philip. He soon left the kingdom in disgust, to the great relief and satisfaction of the nation.

No sooner had Mary come to the throne, than the pope approached her by secret agents to overthrow the reformed religion, and re-establish the papacy in the realm. Cardinal Pole was appointed as the pope's legate at the English court, but was prudently kept on the Continent until events warranted his open appearance in England. A few days after her accession, Mary declared to the pope's secret agent that the very name of Rome was mortally hated in England, and that they would require to proceed with the greatest possible caution, lest they would stir up such opposition as to frustrate all their endeavours to restore the Church to the pope. Little by little, as we have seen, was Protestant ascendancy put down. Convocation and Parliament were Romanised by illegal means; and now both Houses of Parliament resolved to present an address to the queen, praying her to intercede with the legate to have them reconciled to the pope, and they in return agreed to repeal all the laws which were directed against the pope's authority, in proof of their repentance. Cardinal Pole pronounced the following absolution:—"We, by apostolic authority

given unto us by the most holy lord, Pope Julius III., the vicar of Christ on earth, do absolve and deliver you, with the whole realm and dominions thereof, from all heresies and schism, and from all and every judgment, censures, and penalties for that cause incurred: and also we do restore you again to the unity and fellowship of our Holy Mother Church, as in our letters it shall more plainly appear, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Thus England became Catholic again in December, 1554.

And no sooner is the Roman Catholic religion legalised than the flames of persecution burst forth. Mary occupied the throne only four years from the formal restoration of the Catholic religion; but in that short period, no less than two hundred and eighty-eight innocent and faithful followers of Christ perished in the flames of Smithfield, for no other crime than worshipping God according to the teachings of Christ and the apostles, and refusing to take part in the superstitious and idolatrous worship of the Romish Church. Many hundreds also were imprisoned or driven from the country to find an asylum on the Continent. Archbishop Cranmer, and Bishop Ridley and Bishop Latimer, were summoned to Oxford in 1554, and were required to subscribe articles asserting their acceptance of the cardinal doctrines of Romanism: First, that the wafer when consecrated becomes the real body, blood, bones, and nerves of the Lord Jesus Christ; second, that in the mass there is a

living propitiatory sacrifice of the Church for the sins of the living and the dead.

They were allowed to argue these points with Romish divines; that is, they were permitted to state their objections, which were answered by the doctors of the Church of Rome; but if they did not then subscribe the articles, and take part in the idolatrous act of adoring the wafer-god, their lives were to be forfeited.

Cranmer was first called, and boldly declared that these propositions were false, and contrary to God's holy Word. Ridley replied also, "They are false, and spring from a sour and bitter root." Latimer replied, "I have recently read my New Testament over deliberately seven times, but I can find no doctrine of the mass in it, nor yet the marrow-bones nor sinews of the same." Cranmer drew up his views in a most able and concise paper, which he laid before his judges. He asserts, that "those who deny the cup to laymen, in obedience to some human tradition, are manifestly repugnant to Christ, and obnoxious to those rebukes which He addressed to the Scribes and Pharisees, 'Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your traditions. But in vain do ye worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' The mystical bread and wine, received according to Christ's institution, are not only sacraments of His body broken and blood shed for our sakes, but they are also seals, as it were, of the Divine promises and gifts. Faithful Christians hold fellow-

ship with Jesus, and with all His members. From this communion they derive heavenly food, nourishing them unto life eternal, a living stream, quenching the thirst of their labouring consciences, an ineffable joy diffusing itself over their hearts, and strengthening them for all the offices of piety." He thus sets forth the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper as a commemoration of Christ's death, a seal and pledge of His love, and communion with Him by faith; and then goes on to refute the erroneous dogmas of Rome. Some idea of the corrupt and abominable doctrines advocated by the Romish Church at the time of the Reformation, may be obtained from the fact that men were condemned to the flames for refusing to believe that wicked men receive Christ's body in the sacrament. Thus faith and holiness were declared unnecessary to salvation. Let a man, however reprobate, swallow the wafer, and he thereby receives Christ. In opposition to this most blasphemous doctrine, Cranmer declared that, "Only they who partake of Christ are of His mystical body, but evil men are not of His mystical body, therefore they do not partake of Christ."


The sentence of excommunication against these three worthy men was being read. The prolocutor paused in the middle of it, and again asked them if they would recant. "In the name of God, read on," was their noble reply. When the sentence of excommunication was passed, Cranmer said: "From this your judgment and sentence, I appeal to the just judgment

of Almighty God, trusting to be present with Him in heaven, for whose presence on the altar I am thus condemned." Ridley also addressed the judges in these words: "Although I be not of your company, yet doubt I not that my name is written in another place where this sentence will send us sooner than would, in all probability, the common course of nature." The aged Latimer bravely said: "I thank God most heartily that He hath prolonged my life to this end, that I may in this case glorify God by this kind of death." Dr. Weston replied to them: "If you go to heaven in this faith, then I shall never come thither, as I am persuaded." And I suspect he never uttered a greater truth.

CHAPTER XII.

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND THE ENGLISH REFORMATION.

“In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”—1 Cor. xiv. 19.

RCHBISHOP CRANMER, Bishops Ridley, Latimer, and Hooper; and Taylor, Bradford, and Rogers, have all sealed their testimony with their blood during the bloody persecution of Mary, Queen of England. In four short years no less than two hundred and eighty-eight men, sixty women, and forty children were publicly burned for refusing to return to the idolatrous worship of Rome. Her frenzied zeal for the restoration of the Roman Catholic faith, carried out by means of the rack and the stake, made Mary an object of universal abhorrence; and when, on the 17th of November, 1558, the stern messenger laid his hand upon her and called her to account, a universal sigh of relief went up from the heart of the nation.

Elizabeth, daughter of Henry VIII., by Anne Boleyn, was immediately proclaimed queen, amid the unbounded enthusiasm and public rejoicings of the nation. The

Te Deum was chanted in all the London churches on the Sunday after her accession. All praised God as if the nation had been suddenly delivered from some terrible calamity. Elizabeth was not long in making known the fact that she still retained her Protestant opinions, although, to save her head, she had conformed to the Romish worship during the fierce persecutions of her fanatical sister. On the day of her installation, she refused to allow the bloody Bonner, Bishop of London, the honour of kissing her hand. This act was justly translated to mean that she regarded with utter abhorrence the part he had taken in fanning the flames of persecution. In selecting her council she also showed that she was determined to make important changes in ecclesiastical affairs. Persecution was immediately stopped in all parts of the kingdom; and all those who had been cast into prison for their religious opinions were set at liberty. Like the reformers in the time of her brother Edward, Elizabeth resolved to proceed cautiously and with moderation. An incident which occurred during the procession at the time of her installation, showed, to the delight of all true Protestants, how highly she prized the Word of God. In passing through Cheapside, amidst a magnificent display of loyalty and popular enthusiasm, one who acted a part in the pageant presented her with a handsomely-bound copy of the Bible. She received it with evident pleasure, saying, "I thank you heartily for your present. I shall often read this book." This act was taken as a good omen. Within two months

of her accession she summoned a Parliament, which met in January, 1559. The principal object for assembling Parliament was to place the affairs of religion on a satisfactory basis, and to recognise the validity of her title to the throne. Acts were passed also against treason and seditious attacks against the queen's person. Two most important Acts—the Act of Uniformity and the Act of Supremacy—were also the work of this Parliament.

The Act of Uniformity aimed at establishing a uniform worship on the lines of the liturgy of Edward VI., several passages most offensive to the Roman Catholics being omitted—such, for example, as the prayer, “From the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities” deliver us. A rubric directed against the dogma of the real bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament was also omitted; and the words used in distributing the elements were a compromise intended to satisfy both Protestants and Catholics. In the early part of Edward's reign, the words used conveyed, implicitly at least, the Romish doctrine of the real bodily presence. The bread is spoken of as the “body of Christ,” “The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy soul into everlasting life.” In the revised Prayer-book of Edward VI., these words were rejected, and a form much more in accordance with Scripture was adopted: “Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.” In the re-establishment of the Protest-

ant religion by the first Parliament of Elizabeth, in the hope of satisfying both parties, the old formula was superinduced upon the new, so that the formula as it now stands is both Catholic and Protestant—the one part being contradictory of the other. Hence, in these legalised formulæ, ritualists have authority for teaching the Romish doctrine of the real bodily presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Supper. I suspect very few communicants in the Church of England are aware that the words repeated by the officiating minister were deliberately rejected by the early reformers as savouring of popery, and were afterwards restored with the express intention of conciliating the Roman Catholics.

By the Act of Supremacy the supreme authority in ecclesiastical affairs was vested in the crown. By the Oath of Supremacy all who held office in the Church or State, declared as follows:—"I do utterly testify and declare that the queen's highness is the only supreme governor of this realm, as well in all spiritual and ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal." By this oath the spiritual as well as temporal jurisdiction of the pope, or any foreign prince or prelate, was renounced. The Act of Uniformity prohibited the use of any but the established liturgy, under the penalty of forfeiting goods and chattels for the first offence, a year's imprisonment for the second, and imprisonment during life for the third; and imposed a fine of one shilling on all who absented themselves from church on Sundays and holy-days. This Act

absolutely interdicted Roman Catholic services, however privately celebrated.

It is worthy of note that the learned lawyers of that time did not introduce the Act establishing the royal supremacy as a new measure, but as claiming an ancient right. It was entitled, "*An Act restoring to the Crown the ancient jurisdiction over the estate ecclesiastical and spiritual.*" The pope never had any legal claim to jurisdiction in England from the time that England became a monarchy until the Reformation. There is an uninterrupted series of canons and statutes, establishing the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Crown throughout this entire period. Hence, when the pope claimed jurisdiction in England, he was a usurper of power and authority that did not belong to him. Weak kings at different periods, for political reasons, had shown him considerable deference, but he never had any legal claim to supremacy. Obedience rendered to the pope was always illegal and unconstitutional.

The Act of Supremacy was intended to correct many abuses and anomalies introduced during the reign of Queen Mary. It prohibited all appeals to any foreign power, and particularly to the pope of Rome. All payments of tithes and first-fruits to the see of Rome were positively forbidden. All dispensations from the pope were declared null and void. In the Lord's Supper, the cup was enjoined to be given to all communicants, and ordinary bread was to be used in the ordinance instead of the Romish wafer.

Before the Act of Uniformity was passed by Parliament, ample opportunity was given to those who favoured the Roman Catholic service to defend their cause. The head of their party, the Archbishop of York, was asked by the Council to nominate eight of their ablest theologians, to meet in public conference an equal number of reformers to debate the leading points in the controversy between them. The challenge was accepted. The archbishop nominated four bishops and four other ecclesiastics as disputants to uphold the Romish cause. The questions for debate were : (1.) Whether it is not against the Word of God, and the custom of the ancient Church, to use a tongue unknown to the people in the common prayers, and in the administration of the sacraments ? (2.) Whether every church has not authority to appoint, change, and take away ceremonies and ecclesiastical rites, so that the same be done to edification ? (3.) Whether it can be proved from the Word of God that in the mass there is a propitiatory sacrifice for the dead and the living ? On the 31st of March, 1559, the disputants met in Westminster Abbey, in the presence of the Privy Council and both Houses of Parliament. On the first day they discussed the question of conducting the services of the Church in a language unknown to the people. Dr Cole, Dean of St. Paul's, opened the discussion on the Catholic side by a speech full of declamation and abuse, but utterly devoid of argument or proofs. He closed his harangue by declaring that "nothing is more inexpedient than to

bring down religious rites to the level of vulgar understandings, for ignorance is the mother of devotion." Dr Horne, Dean of Durham, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, was chosen to reply. In a calm and scholarly argument, drawn from the first Epistle to the Corinthians and the Fathers of the first five centuries, he presented the whole subject in such a clear and convincing light, that the modern Romish usage was seen to be an entire departure from the teaching of Scripture and the custom of the early Christian Church. The Roman Catholic party, conscious of having utterly failed to establish their position on the first question, by various pretexts managed to evade further discussion. They had lost their cause, and the papacy had received its death-blow in England. The country and Parliament had come to the determination that both the doctrine and the ritual of the Church should be brought to the touchstone of Scripture. The moment that this was done, the Roman Catholic cause was lost. The Church of Rome in all ages has been conscious of this fact; and hence has sought to deprive the people of the Word of God; and, where this could not be effected, to reserve to herself the sole right of interpretation.

The conference having resulted in the triumphant vindication of Protestant principles, a bill was introduced into Parliament for restoring the English liturgy. It met with vigorous opposition in the House of Lords, all the bishops and ten peers having voted against it. However, on the 28th of April, the bill became

law under the name of the Act of Uniformity. It provided that the second service-book of Edward VI., as altered by the committee of divines appointed for that purpose, should be used in all places of worship from and after the festival of St. John the Baptist next ensuing. Another bill was passed for the suppression of all the monasteries, their revenues to divert to the Crown.

A measure was introduced into the House of Commons for restoring to their benefices all incumbents who were deprived during Mary's reign on account of having married. This measure was abandoned at the request of the queen, who had a personal prejudice against married clergymen.

On the 15th of May, the bishops and other clergy of note, were summoned to attend a meeting of the privy council under the presidency of the queen. They were solemnly enjoined to conform to the Acts recently passed by Parliament. The Archbishop of York reminded Her Majesty that during the preceding reign, England had been reconciled to the Roman see, and that her sister, with the consent of Parliament, had engaged to suppress heresy. They could not now recede from this engagement without incurring disgrace and the malediction of the pope. Elizabeth was equal to the occasion, and nobly replied, " ' As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord ' (Josh. xxiv. 15). Being resolved to imitate Josiah, who assembled the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, in order to make, under their advice, a covenant with God, I lately

called together my clergy and my Parliament. My object was to bind myself and my people unto the Lord, and not unto the Roman see. My sister's power extended not to contract the obligations which have just been mentioned. Our records show that the papal jurisdiction over this realm is an usurpation, and they fully justify the statutes which have lately been enacted. It is by following the precedents which have come down to me from a long line of predecessors that I mean to rule; and I hope that in this my successors will follow my example. My crown is in no way subject to any power whatever, save to that of Christ, the King of kings. I shall therefore esteem as enemies, both to God and myself, all such of my subjects as shall hereafter own any foreign or usurped authority within my realm."

Bishop Bonner, whose hands were so deeply dyed in the blood of the martyrs, was the first individual who was required to take the oath of supremacy, and thereby renounce allegiance to the pope. This he refused to do; and so did all the bishops, except Kitchen of Llandaff. It was well for the cause of religion that they refused to conform; for the retention of such men in office would, in a very large measure, have defeated the projected reforms. A considerable number of dignitaries in the Church were deprived of their benefices by this test; but the greater part of the inferior clergy conformed. The monasteries, however, were broken up everywhere, and the monks and nuns left the country. The deprived bishops and

clergy at first enjoyed the full exercise of liberty. The following year, however, they began to organise opposition, preach sedition, and denounce the Reformation. The most prominent of them were then taken into custody. All of them, however, except Bonner, were allowed a large degree of liberty. The queen was determined to avoid even the appearance of harsh dealing; and by this gentle treatment she conciliated very many in the nation who were heartily sick of the horrors perpetrated in the name of religion by her fanatical sister during her brief and bloody reign.

On the 12th of May, 1559, the English service was introduced into the royal chapel, and England was finally relieved from an idolatrous service and a liturgy unintelligible to the great majority of the worshippers. There was nothing in the new liturgy that could offend the most rigid Roman Catholic, the greater part of it being translated from the prayers and liturgies of the Romish Church. Had Cranmer and Ridley, and others of the martyr-throng, been living, they would have insisted on a much more thorough revision, and would have advanced upon the second service-book of Edward instead of going back to conciliate the Catholic party. But there were no thorough-going reformers left in the nation, and hence the natural tendency was to adopt a ritual that would not necessarily arouse the opposition of moderate Catholics. And in this they seemed to have been successful; for during the first eleven years of Elizabeth's reign, according to Chief-Justice Coke, "no

person, of whatsoever persuasion of Christian religion, at any time refused to come to the public service celebrated in the Church of England. But after the bull of Pius V. was published against her Majesty, all they that depended on the pope obeyed the bull and refused to come to church." It is clear, therefore, that the English liturgy did not in itself give offence to the Catholics. It was intended to be a compromise between the Romish liturgy and the simple service of the Churches of Geneva and Scotland.

Dr. Parker, who had been chaplain to Anne Boleyn, the queen's mother, a divine of great prudence and learning, was elected Archbishop of Canterbury; and the vacant bishoprics were filled up by learned and godly men. Dr. Jewel, the newly-ordained Bishop of Salisbury, immediately employed his great stores of learning in proving that all the dogmas of Rome, which had been rejected by the Protestants, were never heard of in the Christian Church during the first six centuries. The new bishops did all in their power to instruct the people and complete the reformation of the Church in their own diocese. Many of the inferior clergy who had conformed were ignorant and ill-qualified to discharge their ministerial duties. With a view of obviating objections to their principles and doctrine, a declaration of belief was drawn up for them to subscribe. It contained an assent to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, and a renunciation of Romish and Anabaptist errors.

Although the most advanced of the reformers had

been cut off by the persecution of Mary, still the new bishops were in advance of the queen in their desire for a thorough reformation of the ritual and decorations of the Church. The queen for a long time persisted in having lighted candles and a crucifix in her own chapel, and maintained that such decorations, together with figures of the Virgin Mary and the Apostle John, might be suffered to remain in the churches. It was only after persistent pleading that the bishops procured an order authorising the visitors to remove everything that had been abused to superstitious and idolatrous purposes. Elizabeth now wished to have at least a cross erected in every church; but the bishops knew well that such a concession could not fail to operate injuriously upon weak and superstitious minds, and to the credit of the queen, she graciously yielded the point. She was not, however, convinced as yet; and, though she yielded for the time to the representations of the bishops, and allowed the crucifix to be removed from her own chapel, yet she had it replaced about the year 1570. On another point—namely, the marriage of the clergy—she never could be persuaded to adopt the Protestant and Scriptural view. During her long reign of forty-five years, she never consented to repeal the statute passed during Mary's reign, making it illegal for the clergy to marry.

The ritualistic predilections of the queen proved a serious obstacle in other matters of reform, and especially in the matter of vestments. The most eminent bishops—Jewel, Grindal, Sandys, Nowell, Parkhurst,

and others—argued strongly against the use of the surplice and other popish vestments. The late Bishop Hooper, who died at the stake for the Protestant cause, long refused to wear the episcopal vestments. Bishop Ridley, perhaps the most famous of all the martyrs, pulled down the altars in the churches, and ordered the Lord's Supper to be administered at tables placed in the middle of the churches. Bishop Jewel declared clerical vestments to be a stage dress, a fool's coat, a relic of the Amorites. Archbishop Grindal long hesitated to accept the office of archbishop, owing to his intense aversion to what he termed "the mummery of consecration." Bishop Parkhurst urged the Church of England to adopt the simple service and garb of the Presbyterian Churches of Geneva and Scotland, founded by Calvin and Knox. Notwithstanding the personal influence of the queen, the proposal to abolish these objectionable usages was lost in the Convocation of 1562 by only one vote. It is evident, therefore, that the queen alone was the prime cause of retaining in the worship of the Church those ritualistic and popish observances which so soon compelled the Puritan party to withdraw from the Established Church. Besides the vestments, it was proposed to abolish saints' days, to omit the sign of the cross in baptism, and to leave the matter of kneeling at the Lord's Supper to the discretion of the ordinary. That such proposals should have been rejected was a great calamity to the Church, as subsequent events abundantly proved.

The Reformed Church of England was established upon a compromise. It aimed at taking a middle course between a Scriptural simplicity and a gorgeous ceremonial. The Reformed Churches in Scotland and on the Continent adopted the simple forms of the primitive Church, as set up by the apostles, and prospered and enjoyed internal peace. In England it was different. The compromise with Rome proved to be the seed of bitter dissension.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOHN KNOX AND THE CHURCH OF ROME.

“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”—2 TIM. iii. 12.

EVERY age of the world has had its heroes—men of brave heart and noble purpose. The Church of the Reformation, in a very special sense, was rich in such heroic worthies. For firm faith in God, unswerving fidelity to duty, love and loyalty to Christ and the Scriptures, and an utter disregard of danger and all personal considerations, no one of that noble army is entitled to a higher place on the roll of fame, or a dearer place in Christian hearts, than the illustrious Scottish reformer, John Knox. He was not the first reformer. He was preceded by Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli on the Continent, and Bilney, Latimer, and others in England. Still, the Christian Church owes much to the courage and earnestness and fidelity of this heroic man of God. His lot was cast in troublous times. Brave hearts were needed for the defence of the truth. By corruption in doctrine, and the vices of the clergy, and the superstition of the masses, pure religion had almost

disappeared. From the time of Wycliffe, indeed, earnest, faithful men here and there had lifted up their voice in favour of reformation in doctrine, in ritual, and in life; but Rome invariably answered their demand by the fire and the stake.

From being a community of brethren, all one in Christ Jesus, as in the time of the apostles, the Church had gradually become an absolute monarchy, with the pope as supreme law-giver. Instead of all being members of the Church who had the Spirit of Christ, those only could receive the Spirit who were members of the Church. The Church, through its bishops, came to be regarded as the only channel through which the Holy Spirit could be received. Whoever opposed the teaching of the Church, or questioned the authority of the pope, was excommunicated and placed under the ban of the Church, and was, therefore, beyond the reach of salvation. Salvation was dispensed by the Church only. The pope claimed to be the vicar of Christ on earth, and forgave sins, as Christ forgave them while on earth. The doctrine of justification by faith and salvation by grace was a dead letter. Rites and ceremonies were multiplied. Penance took the place of penitence. At first penance consisted in a public confession of certain scandalous sins by those who had been temporarily excluded from church-fellowship and wished to be restored. By and by it came to include every sin, and took the place of true repentance. Instead of looking to Christ for pardon through faith in His finished work, men were taught to seek

pardon through penance, and tears, and fasting, and mortifying the flesh. It was salvation by works and not by faith.

This system soon became too burdensome to be endured; hence indulgences were substituted for penance and afflicting the body. On the payment of certain sums of money to the Church, men were to have their sins remitted—a scale being fixed according to the means of different classes, and according also to the character of the sin. It was claimed that the Church had a vast treasure of merits which she could dispense on her own terms. This treasure consisted of the blood of Christ, together with the merits of the saints of past ages, who, by their devotion and self-sacrifice and charity, had done more than was required for their own salvation. The control of this treasure was confided to the pope, as Christ's vicar on earth. He could dispense it as he thought fit, and on his own terms, to sinners on earth and to souls in purgatory.

The philosophers of Alexandria, conscious that men's lives and character in themselves were not such as to fit them for fellowship with God in heaven, and knowing nothing of the Gospel plan of salvation, had suggested a purifying fire into which the souls of men passed at death, and where they remained until they were thoroughly purified and perfected. The Church of Rome adopted this suggestion, and made it a dogma of the Church under the name of purgatory. The pope claimed to be able, by the rites of the Church,

not only to forgive the sins of the living, but also to release the souls of departed friends from the pains of purgatorial fire. So much money, paid for priests to say masses for the souls of the dead, shortened their stay in that awful place.

The sacrifice of the mass was substituted for the death of Christ, and thus men were turned away from the sinner's Saviour and were directed to look to the ceremonies of the Church for salvation. From no pulpit in the land was the loving voice of Jesus heard, saying, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

The Word of God was kept from the people, and the service was conducted in an unknown tongue. And so ignorant were the priests of their duties, as the spiritual instructors of the people, that many were found boasting that they had never read the New Testament, although they had burned many copies of it. In 1545, when very severe laws were passed against reading or possessing the New Testament, such was the ignorance of the priests, that many of them declared it to be a new book written by Martin Luther. As for them, they did not want any *new* testaments, give them the *old* one. About the same time, when the Vicar of Dollar, Thomas Forrest, was summoned before the Bishop of Dunkeld for preaching from the Gospel and Epistle for the day, he was admonished, and told that it was too much to preach every Sunday. "It is enough," said the bishop, "when you find any good Gospel or good Epistle, that setteth forth the

rights of the Church, to preach that, and let the rest be." Forrest replied that he had carefully studied the Old and New Testaments, and he found that all the Gospels and Epistles were good ; but if his lordship would show him the good and evil Epistles, he would preach the good and pass over the evil. The bishop replied, sharply, "I thank God I have lived well these many years, and never knew either the Old or New Testament." From this incident arose the common proverb of that time, applied to very ignorant persons : "Ye are like the Bishop of Dunkeld, that knew neither new law nor old." During his trial in 1538, the Vicar of Dollar quoted the words of Paul : "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand in an unknown tongue." When asked where he found that, he replied by producing the New Testament. The public prosecutor cried out, "Behold he has the book of heresy !"—for the pope had condemned the English Bible. "Brother," he replied, "God forgive you, you ought to say better than call the Evangel of Jesus Christ the book of heresy." But the pope had condemned the Bible, and Thomas Forrest and his New Testament were burned together at the stake. This is only one of many instances that might be given of the gross ignorance and blind fanaticism even of the superior clergy of that time.

There lives and character also were as gross and scandalous as their ignorance. In 1549, a Provincial Council was held at Edinburgh for the express purpose of reforming abuses. This Council declared that

“corruption and profane lewdness of life, as well as gross ignorance of the arts and sciences, prevailed among the clergy of almost every degree”; and they passed fifty-eight canons for correcting these abuses. Such was the state of Scotland when our illustrious reformer came upon the scene.

John Knox was born at Haddington, near Edinburgh, in the year 1505, the same year in which Martin Luther entered the monastery and endeavoured to live a religious life. His parents, although not wealthy, were in comfortable circumstances, and were able to give their son a liberal education. After passing through the Grammar School at Haddington, he was sent to the University of Glasgow at the age of sixteen. Greek and Hebrew were not taught in the universities at this time. Those who studied for the Church restricted their studies to Latin, the philosophy of Aristotle, canon law, and the theology of the schoolmen. Knox, however, acquired the Greek language before he attained to middle life; and after he was fifty years of age he mastered Hebrew.

The mind of young Knox was moulded in a large degree by the teaching of John Mair, a distinguished scholar and professor of philosophy and theology at Glasgow. In ecclesiastical polity he denied the supremacy of the pope, and taught that a General Council might rebuke, restrain, and even depose him. He maintained that Church censures and even the pope's excommunication had no force if pronounced on insufficient grounds. He held that tithes were not

of Divine right, but of mere human appointment. He condemned the pomp and luxury of the court of Rome and the bishops, and boldly declared against the abuses and corruptions of the clergy. Such teaching, no doubt, was the means of preventing Knox from ever becoming a superstitious devotee of Rome, and a blind follower of the pope. On taking the degree of Master of Arts, he was appointed teacher of philosophy in the University of St. Andrews, in which he acquired great distinction. At the age of twenty-four he took priest's orders.

Shortly after this, he entered upon a new field of investigation which completely revolutionised his religious beliefs, and changed the whole current of his life. Instead of resting satisfied with brief extracts from the writings of the early Christian Fathers, to be found in the works of the schoolmen and doctors of canon law, he determined to study for himself the complete works of these early writers, especially the writings of Jerome and Augustine. By these studies he was led to a still higher source of information—namely, the Word of God. And no sooner were the practices and beliefs of the Romish Church placed side by side with Scripture and the writings of Augustine, than a new revelation dawned upon him. He saw clearly that the Church had wholly departed from the faith once delivered to the saints. At this time he was about thirty years of age. He still prosecuted his studies; and the more he studied the Word of God, the more was his faith in the Roman Catholic Church

shaken. Thus it was with all the reformers. So soon as their minds were directed to the Holy Scriptures, they discovered that the Church of Rome had apostatized from the teaching of Christ and the apostles. Tyndale's New Testament had already found its way into Scotland, and was doing its quiet work in different parts of the country, at the very time it was bringing wondrous revelations to Knox. Thus God in his good providence was preparing the country for the reformer at the very time He was preparing the reformer for the country. The Bible in English was a condemned book; but, from the year 1526, it was diligently circulated in private, and read with great avidity. At the dead hour of night little bands of God-fearing people would assemble unobserved and read the sacred volume with rapture and delight. Yes, the Word of God was precious in those days; for there was not a single public preacher of the truth in Scotland.

Poets and satirists, and dramatic writers also, did much to expose the abuses and superstitions of the Church and the vices of the clergy. This class of writers was allowed very great latitude of expression, as their attacks were not personal, and were professedly for the amusement of the people. But many of the biting sarcasms and fine sallies of wit from the pen of such able writers as George Buchanan and Sir David Lindsay, laid hold upon the people, and made a deep and permanent impression by showing up the meaningless and superstitious ceremonies of the Church. These dramatic representations, exposing the ignorance and

immorality of the clergy, and ridiculing the grosser superstitions of the Romish religion, were frequently acted, not only before large assemblies of the people, but even before the nobility and the royal family. In this way superstitious reverence for the rites and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church was broken down, and the way was prepared for the reception of the truth.

The clergy, however, wielded tremendous influence. More than half of the property in the country belonged to the Church. Bishops and abbots equalled the nobility in wealth, and claimed superiority to them in rank. They were privy councillors, lords of session, members of parliament, and held the principal offices of State. Ignorant, idle, immoral monks filled the country like a swarm of locusts, living in luxury and idleness in the monasteries. Of convents, nunneries, and monasteries there were one hundred and fifty, most of which had become the haunts of vice and immorality. Bishops openly kept their concubines, and married their bastard children to the nobles of the land by giving them large dowries. No bishop in all Scotland even attempted to preach a sermon, nor could they have done so had they made the attempt, so dense was their ignorance on all matters pertaining to the Gospel. Never was a country in a more wretched plight. Total darkness prevailed—darkness that might be felt. Happily it was the dark hour that presaged the dawn. The time to favour Zion has come, and God raises up noble men to spread the light of Gospel truth throughout the kingdom.

The Reformation in Scotland was a strictly religious movement, brought about by the potent agency of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. It commenced by a revival in the hearts of men. It was no mere external correction of glaring corruptions and abuses, although it carried that with it. The early Scottish reformers were regenerated men—men of faith and prayer; men filled with love to God's Word and loyalty to Christ; men who had found in the Scriptures the way of salvation through faith in the sinner's Saviour. These early pioneers, having themselves found peace and joy by accepting Christ as their Saviour, as He was revealed in the Scriptures, began to proclaim with earnestness and enthusiasm the grand doctrine of justification by faith, apart altogether from the rites and ceremonies of the Church. Rome had taught that no man can be certain that he is saved in this life. When he has done all within his power, he gets no farther than purgatory at death. There he must remain until the prayers and intercessions of the Church effect his deliverance. These prayers and consequent deliverance are contingent upon the fidelity and liberality of surviving friends in keeping up their payments for the priests to say masses for the souls of the dead; so that assurance of salvation is manifestly impossible. But when the reformers proclaimed, on the authority of Christ, immediate pardon of all sin, and could testify from their own experience the blessed sense of assurance of salvation, and an inward peace and joy which assured them of the constant

presence of Christ dwelling in them by His Spirit, men's eyes were opened, and they saw in the Gospel that for which their souls were so earnestly yearning.

The first pioneer of the Reformation was Patrick Hamilton, a young man of noble descent, and nearly related to the royal family. While studying for the Church, he became acquainted with the reformed doctrines, probably through the writings of Luther. The works of Luther had found their way into Scotland previous to 1525, for in that year an Act of Parliament was passed prohibiting the importation of Luther's books into Scotland. Thirsting for a fuller acquaintance with the doctrines of the reformers, he visited Germany, and spent some time with Luther and Melanchthon, and other reformed divines. But, as he advanced in the knowledge of the Scriptures, he was filled with an intense desire to make known to his benighted countrymen the glad tidings of salvation. His friends in Germany represented to him the danger to which such an undertaking would expose him, but the inward call was so strong, that he determined to set up the standard of the cross in Scotland. He arrived early in the year 1528, before Henry VIII. had broken with Rome, and began boldly to declaim against the corruptions of the Church, and to unfold the way of salvation through simple faith in Christ. His rank, and learning, and eloquence, and piety, made him a mighty power in the country, and the clergy became alarmed. The Archbishop of St. Andrews, who was also the chancellor of the kingdom,

a cruel and unscrupulous man, fearing to proceed against him openly, on account of his great influence with the people, had him decoyed to St. Andrews, pretending that he wished to have a friendly conference with him regarding his doctrine. At the dead of night he was dragged from his bed and brought before the archbishop; and, having confessed his faith in Christ, he was condemned to be burned. On the 28th of February, 1528, this noble young man, for he was only in his twenty-fourth year, was burned as a heretic. His last words were distinctly heard, rising above the roaring of the flames, "How long, O Lord, shall darkness cover this realm? How long wilt Thou suffer this tyranny of men? Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

This dastardly deed roused many in the nation from the slumber of death which had overtaken them. The generous Celtic nature has always been averse to cruelty and brutality, and could never endure to see the innocent suffer without any show of justice being extended to them. Hence the conscience of the nation revolted from such atrocious deeds; and Rome reckoned without her host on the day she cut short the precious life of Patrick Hamilton, the first martyr of the Scottish Reformation.

Both the learned and the common people, who had heard his dying words, and had witnessed his heroic death, began to inquire how it came to pass that the professed Church of Christ put men to death for no other crime than simply prizing and teaching the

words of Christ. And inquiry soon led to the conviction that the Romish Church was an apostate Church—that she had departed from the truth of Christ—that her dark practices and superstitious beliefs could not stand the searching light of God's truth as revealed in the Scriptures. Tyndale's New Testament enabled all to place the teaching of Christ and the apostles beside the teaching of the Church, and to compare the qualifications required of true ministers of the Word with the scandalous lives of the clergy; and their eyes were opened. They saw that the Romish Church dare not put the Bible in the hands of the people and retain their allegiance.

The period of persecution in Scotland was short, and the victims comparatively few. However, for ten years—1530 to 1540—many excellent men were counted worthy to receive the baptism of blood, and take their place among the martyr-throng. Henry Forrest was led to the stake for possessing a copy of the New Testament. Four men were burned at Stirling for eating meat at a wedding during Lent, and several others shared their fate for no greater offence; and many took refuge on the Continent.

A merciful Providence soon interrupted the work of persecution; but not a moment too soon to save the best blood of the nation. In 1539 the Archbishop of St. Andrews died, and was succeeded by his nephew, Cardinal David Beaton, a rapacious and bloody persecutor. He submitted to James V. a list of 360 noble-

men and gentlemen who were known to be favourable to the reformed doctrine, and endeavoured to obtain his consent to their execution by drawing his attention to the immense wealth that would fall to him by the forfeiture of their estates. However, the hand of death removed the king in 1542. The unprincipled, crafty cardinal forged a will in the king's name, appointing himself governor of the kingdom. But, fortunately, the forgery was discovered, and the Earl of Arran, a true friend of the reformers, was elected governor, and the persecution was stayed. John Knox had taught reformed doctrine in the University previous to this time; but it was in this year (1542) that he publicly avowed himself on the side of the reformers.

One other precious life, however, fell a victim to the cruelty and fanaticism of Cardinal Beaton. This was George Wishart, a learned, devoted, and amiable minister of great eloquence and popularity—a most saintly servant of God.

Beaton had determined to have his life, and he gave himself no rest until he accomplished his dark designs. He bribed a priest to assassinate him on one occasion as he was descending from the pulpit. Wishart, who was gifted with a marvellous degree of prescience, took him by the hand, saying, “My friend, what would you do?” and seized the dagger which the villain had concealed under his gown. The man was utterly confounded, and confessed the whole plot. The people would have torn the wretch limb from limb, but the

gentle Wishart folded him in his arms and saved his life. Although foiled in this attempt, the cardinal still determined to have his life. He forged a letter asking Wishart to visit an intimate friend who had taken suddenly ill. After proceeding a short distance he suddenly stopped, saying to his friends who accompanied him, "I am forbidden by God to go any farther. Will some of you ride to yonder hill, and see if they have not laid a plot for my life?" And sure enough the cardinal had sixty horsemen waiting to intercept him; but God delivered him out of their hands. On his return he said to his friends, "I know I shall soon end my days by the hands of that blood-thirsty man; but God will send you comfort after me. This realm shall be illuminated with the light of Christ's Gospel as clearly as any realm ever was since the days of the apostles. The House of God shall be built in it—yea, it shall not lack the very copestone. Neither shall this be long in doing, for there shall not many suffer after me." These prophetic words were very soon fulfilled. Shortly after they were uttered, the Earl of Bothwell basely betrayed him, and delivered him to the cardinal. He was tried for denying auricular confession, purgatory, and the mass, and was condemned by Beaton to be burned as a heretic. The Earl of Arran wrote to the cardinal to stay execution; but he set all authority at defiance, and on the 1st of March, 1546, the noble, devoted Wishart was committed to the flames. According to his own word he was almost the last to suffer. While at the stake he

declared that Cardinal Beaton, who so proudly looked down from the window of the castle, should within a few days "lie as ignominiously in the same as he now proudly rested himself. In the following May he was assassinated in the same room where he sat when Wishart uttered his prediction. He lived abhorred and died unlamented. The other words of Wishart's prophecy were also fulfilled. John Knox now took up Wishart's mantle, and lived to build up the House of God to the very copestone.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOHN KNOX AND THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION.

“I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”—REV. xviii. 4.

THE martyrdom of Wishart gave a mighty impetus to the Reformation. In all times of persecution, the blood of the martyrs has proved to be the seed of the Church. Wishart was held in such high estimation by the people that his death made an immense impression upon all classes. He was greatly distinguished for his profound learning and persuasive eloquence, as well as for his fervent piety, and zeal, and self-sacrifice in seeking to lead his countrymen to a knowledge of Christ and the Gospel plan of salvation. Some of the leading nobles usually accompanied him in his preaching tours, and multitudes flocked to hear the Word of God at his mouth. John Knox was among the number of his devoted admirers, and became his personal attendant. As Elisha waited upon Elijah, so Knox waited upon Wishart; and, like Elisha, he took up the mantle of his master and carried on His work.

During the first years of the regency of the Earl of Arran, the principles of the Reformation were rapidly advanced. In 1542, Parliament passed an Act permitting all subjects to read the Word of God in their own language. Scotland, therefore, preceded England in the enjoyment of this boon; for, at this very time, under Henry VIII., many lost their lives for reading the Bible. And even two years after, when the English Parliament permitted the nobles and gentry to possess the Bible, it was forbidden to the common people. And now that the Word of God has free course, the Reformation in Scotland advances with rapid strides. The bishops, indeed, opposed the Act, and after it was passed they did all in their power to make it a dead letter. But, in spite of their opposition, the Bible was now to be found in nearly every gentleman's house, and the New Testament was eagerly read by the great bulk of the people. This was the mighty power that quickly dispelled the darkness of Romish superstition in Scotland. Romanism and Ritualism have never been able to stand the searching light of God's truth.

John Knox left the professor's chair at St. Andrews and devoted himself to teaching and preaching; but the priestly faction persecuted him everywhere. After the death of Cardinal Beaton, the vacant archbishopric was conferred upon John Hamilton, an illegitimate brother of Arran. Hamilton had great influence with the regent, and eventually won him back from the reformed doctrines. He now dismissed his councillors

who were favourable to the reformation of the Church, and persecution followed.

In 1547, Knox returned to St. Andrews and taught his pupils in the castle, and preached and catechised publicly in the parish church. Among those who had taken refuge in the castle from the persecution set on foot by the archbishop, was Sir David Lindsay. Being in high favour with James IV., and his son, James V., great license was allowed him in his poetical effusions, in which he mercilessly exposed the vices of the clergy and the absurd superstitions of popery. And now that the popish party is again dominant, the clergy determine to take vengeance upon Lindsay and repay him for all the ridicule that his pointed satires had brought upon them. Other eminent reformers had also taken refuge in the castle. They were so highly pleased with Knox's teaching and catechising, that they gave him a most cordial call to be their minister. With characteristic modesty and an overwhelming sense of the responsibility of the pastoral office, he hesitated to accept the call. Convinced, however, that this was a direct call from God to engage more actively in direct spiritual work, he at length acceded to the wishes of the congregation, and was recognised as their pastor. He ever looked back with deep interest on this event as a guiding step on the true path of reformation. He recognised the choice of the congregation as an important and essential element in the call to the ministry.

At this time he entered into a public discussion

with Dean Annand, the Principal of St Leonard's College, in which he undertook to prove that "the Roman Church had further degenerated from the purity of doctrine which was in the days of the apostles, than had the Jewish Church from the ordinances of Moses when they consented to the death of Jesus Christ." This was a bold challenge; and, as many of the people could not read his writings, he was pressed to give the proofs from the pulpit on the following Sabbath. He cordially complied with the request, and undertook to prove from Scripture that the papal system was antichristian; that "the Man of Sin" found its fulfilment in the pope, who "exalted himself above all that is called God." He graphically depicted the vicious lives of the popes, quoting only from Roman Catholic writers, and compared Romish doctrine with the teaching of Scripture, showing conclusively that the Church of Rome had wholly departed from the faith once delivered to the saints, especially in regard to justification, holy days, the Lord's Supper, abstaining from meats, and forbidding to marry. Among his audience were the professors of the University, and a large number of the clergy. His earnestness and eloquence helped to give point and power to his forcible reasoning, and a deep and lasting impression was made upon the minds of many who heard him. Other reformers, both in England and in Scotland, had attacked the grosser abuses of the Romish Church, contenting themselves with lopping off some of the branches; but Knox boldly proclaimed the whole

popish system to be unscriptural and antichristian, and thus dealt a deadly blow at the very roots of that pernicious system, which, like the upas tree, poisons and blights all who seek shelter under its wide-spreading branches. Within a few months a great number of the inhabitants of the town formally left the Romish Church, and publicly professed the Protestant faith by partaking of the Lord's Supper according to the institution of this ordinance by Christ. This was the first observance of the Lord's Supper in the kingdom, according to the mode adopted by the reformers, with the exception of a strictly private communion observed by Wishart in the previous year, just before his martyrdom. This was in the early part of the year 1547. In November of the same year, the first Parliament of Edward VI. in England passed an Act enjoining that the cup should be given to the laity; so that only about six months had elapsed when the reformers in England followed the example of Knox in observing the Lord's Supper according to Christ's appointment, and rejecting the so-called Sacrifice of the Mass.

An alliance between France and Scotland was cemented by the betrothal of Mary, daughter of James V., afterwards known in history as "Mary, Queen of Scots," to the eldest son of the French king. In virtue of this alliance, the regent obtained aid from France to reduce the garrison of the Castle of St. Andrews. They were attacked both by sea and land, and were compelled to surrender to the French

commander, who offered most honourable terms. They were all to be transported to France, and if they were averse to serving under the French king, they were to be free to go to any other country except Scotland. Knox, as the chaplain of the garrison, determined to share their fate, and was taken prisoner with the garrison. On their arrival in France, by the command of the pope and the Scottish bishops, they were treacherously betrayed. The terms of the surrender were violated, and some were imprisoned, while Knox and others were condemned to hard labour as galley-slaves, where they remained for nineteen months.

This unfortunate event was a great blow to the reformers in Scotland. Many of the ablest and most devoted Protestants in the kingdom were removed at a time when their presence seemed quite indispensable to the success of the Reformation cause. However, the invasion of Scotland by the Duke of Somerset the same year, and the disastrous defeat of the Scots at Pinkie, compelled the regent to refrain from irritating and persecuting the Protestants for a time. But when a treaty of peace was signed with England in 1550, the regent sanctioned severe laws against all who refused to conform to the Romish religion; and although the crafty and fanatical archbishop dared not openly put men to death for holding Protestant doctrines, yet he succeeded in compassing the death of several distinguished persons by false charges of cherishing secret sympathy with the English. On regaining his liberty in February, 1549, Knox took up his abode in

England, where he remained five years. In 1551, he was appointed chaplain to Edward VI., which post he retained until the death of the king. He was offered the living of All-Hallows, London, and also the newly-formed bishopric of Newcastle. However, he was not satisfied with the partial character of the English Reformation, and declined both appointments.

He was opposed to kneeling at the sacrament, as it seemed to favour the adoration of the elements, and was not in accordance with the example of Christ. He also claimed for ministers the right to exclude the unworthy and profane from the Lord's table. When asked by the council why he declined the offer of a bishopric, he frankly declared that the episcopal office had no sanction in Scripture, and he preferred to follow the practice and teaching of Christ and the apostles. This was the basis on which he set up the Presbyterian Church of Scotland a few years later. He believed that Christ and the apostles had given a perfect model of Church government and mode of worship, good for all time, and his judgment on the matter has been confirmed by the experience of three centuries.

In England, the pope's supremacy was transferred to the king, while Knox and the Scottish reformers proclaimed Christ to be the only Head of the Church. In England, the hierarchy of archbishops, bishops, deans, canons, &c., were allowed to remain, the whole being placed in subordination to the civil power. Knox insisted upon the parity of presbyters, subject

only to Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, and the Scriptures as the only rule of faith—"One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethern." In England the grosser superstitions were removed from the service and ritual, whereas Knox discarded everything that was not stamped by the imprimatur of Christ and the apostles.

As early as the year 1547, before Edward's first reforming Parliament met, Knox publicly taught at St. Andrews that no mere man could be recognised as head of the Church without dishonour to Christ—that the only true bishops were those who preached and personally took the pastoral oversight of the flock—and that the Lord's Supper ought to be observed exactly as it was instituted by Christ. He defended these principles with great earnestness at Newcastle in 1550, and before the privy council three years later.

The leading English reformers were ready to admit that his views on Church government were thoroughly sound and Scriptural, but they were willing to adapt their views to what they considered the exigencies of the time. Cranmer hoped to be able to introduce the reforms for which Knox pleaded, only he wished to proceed gradually and with caution. Knox, on the other hand, believed in pulling up the upas tree of Romanism by the roots, and planting in its place a pure Scriptural Church. However, although he declined to take charge of a diocese or a parish, yet he was willing, as king's chaplain and itinerant preacher, to do all in his power to spread the knowledge of

Christ in the kingdom. He also assisted Cranmer and Ridley in compiling and revising the Articles of Religious Belief, known as the Thirty-nine Articles. But during his residence in England he never conformed to the liturgy in the service. An absolute conformity was not enjoined upon ministers until the Act of Uniformity was passed in the reign of Elizabeth. Ministers who had the gift of free prayer were allowed to exercise it, while weak brethren usually leaned upon the liturgy, as a lame man leans upon his crutch.

Knox was in London when Edward died, 6th July, 1553. On the accession of Mary, he faithfully warned those to whom he ministered to prepare for a time of trial and persecution. He knew enough of Romanism to be convinced that the fair promises of a bigoted papist, as Mary was known to be, could not be trusted, but might be broken any moment by the interposition of the pope. And the result confirmed his judgment. Mary's first Parliament repealed all the laws passed during Edward's reign that were favourable to the Reformation; the Roman Catholic religion was again established; the Protestant form of worship had to cease on the 20th December, 1553; and those who refused to conform were to be dealt with as heretics.

Knox by this time had retired to Newcastle, where he improved the last days of liberty by preaching every day. The enemies of the Reformation, however, narrowly watched his movements, and even intercepted his letters to his wife, hoping in this manner to find an accusation against him. His wife's relations, greatly

against his own inclinations, prevailed upon him to retire to a place of safety for a time. In January, 1554, he landed in France. Shortly after his arrival at Dieppe he wrote to his mother-in-law, Mrs Bowes, regretting that he had yielded to their tears and entreaties, as his action might be misunderstood, and tend to discourage those at home who were endeavouring to hold up the banner of the Reformation. Like the Apostle Paul, he did not count his life dear unto himself; if he might only testify the Gospel of the grace of God. He did all in his power to confirm and strengthen the faithful in England by letters earnestly exhorting them to steadfastness, and entreating them to give no countenance to the idolatrous worship set up among them. On the following month he made his way to Switzerland, and was cordially received by the Swiss reformers. He conferred with some of the most learned divines on the Continent on many matters concerning doctrine and ritual. Their views so completely concided with his own, that he was thoroughly convinced that he had followed the right course in advocating a thorough reformation of the Church, and in refusing to be satisfied with compromises and temporary expedients in matters of such transcendent importance. While at Geneva he became acquainted with the illustrious Calvin, who was a mighty power among the reformers at Geneva. His writings in advocacy of reformed doctrines were already translated into nearly all the European languages. His theological writings were thoroughly in harmony with

the views of Knox, and a most intimate friendship sprang up between them, which lasted to the time of Calvin's death.

During the year 1554, persecution was rife in England, and great numbers were driven to seek refuge on the Continent. Knox ministered for a time to the English refugees at Frankfort; but his heart yearned for Scotland, for he knew how much the Protestants needed some faithful and fearless preacher to encourage them to resist the blandishments of Rome. In September, 1555, he arrived in Scotland after an absence of seven years. During the previous year the storm of persecution had considerably abated. The clergy congratulated themselves that they had been able to stamp out all heresy, and had now relaxed their vigilance. There were, however, many Protestants in the kingdom, although they did not expose themselves to certain death by a public avowal of their beliefs.

The queen-dowager, widow of James V., was ambitious enough to contest the regency with the Earl of Arran. By fair promises she won the support of the Protestants, and succeeded in obtaining the regency, in April, 1554. Some of the English Protestants also took refuge in Scotland this same year from the persecution of Mary, and thus teachers were supplied to the people. The news of this favourable change in the affairs of Scotland induced Knox to come to the help of his countrymen.

On his arrival in Edinburgh, he found a little band eager to enjoy his ministrations. He was not allowed

the use of the churches, so that he had to preach to successive congregations in a private house during the whole of the day, and also during a good part of the night. Up to this time most of the Protestants, in order to avoid persecution, continued to attend the Romish worship. Knox succeeded in convincing them of the idolatrous nature of the sacrifice of the mass; and, at a public meeting held in Edinburgh, in November, 1555, they agreed to separate themselves entirely from the worship of Rome. This was a most important step in the progress of the Reformation.

But the zealous reformer did not confine his labours to Edinburgh. He yielded to a pressing invitation from Erskine of Dun, to spend a month with him at his family seat in Angus, and preached every day to large assemblies of the most influential men in the county. He next took up his abode at Calder House, in West Lothian, the seat of Sir James Sandilands, who had for many years been a tower of strength to the Reformation in that district. This visit was productive of rich results. Three young noblemen, who afterwards rendered signal service to the Reformation, were so deeply impressed with Knox's doctrine and exhortations, that they at once espoused his cause with all the ardour of youthful enthusiasm. These were Lord Lorne, who shortly afterwards succeeded to the Earldom of Argyle; Lord Erskine, afterwards the Earl of Mar and Regent of Scotland; and Lord James Stuart, afterwards Earl of Murray and Regent of Scotland during the minority of James VI. That

was a glorious day for Scotland, when these three young noblemen yielded up their hearts to Christ, and determined to hold up the Protestant banner by the side of John Knox.

In January, 1556, Knox visited Kyle, in Ayrshire, where there was a little colony of Lollards ever since the time of Wycliffe, and also the town of Ayr. Here he preached to large congregations, and dispensed the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in several places. About Easter of this year he visited Mearns, and most of the gentry of that district publicly professed the reformed religion by sitting down at the Lord's table. They also entered into a solemn covenant, by which they openly renounced the Romish religion, and pledged themselves to do all in their power to promote and maintain the preaching of the Gospel in its primitive purity and simplicity.

The fame of Knox's preaching had now drawn so many to hear him, that the clergy became apprised of his presence in the kingdom, and were greatly alarmed. Consequently, he was summoned to appear before a convention of the clergy on the 15th of May, to give an account of his doctrine. They never expected that he would attend, hoping to have been able to condemn him in his absence. But the fearless reformer resolved to answer the summons, and arrived in Edinburgh before the day appointed for the convention, supported by a large number of influential gentlemen. The clergy, however, turned faint-hearted, conscious of their inability to discuss the points in dispute with

such a veteran, and agreed to set aside the convention. Knox improved the occasion, and for ten days preached twice a day to large congregations in Edinburgh.

At this time Earl Marischal attended his meetings, and was so highly pleased with his preaching, that he and others prevailed upon Knox to write to the queen-regent in the hope of securing her sympathy with the reformed preachers. He urged the duty of rulers to use their influence to reform abuses and put down idolatrous worship, and to protect those ministers who preached a pure Gospel and worshipped God according to His Word.

He now received an invitation from Geneva urgently requesting him to accept the pastorate of the English congregation there. He felt it to be his duty to accept the call, for, like another Paul, his soul burned within him to preach the Gospel in all lands. Before leaving, however, he visited Castle Campbell, the seat of the Earl of Argyle, and won over the aged Earl to the reformed cause. He remained a firm adherent to Protestant principles until his death. On his death-bed he solemnly charged his son, Lord Lorne, to continue steadfast and unwavering in his support of the Reformation, which he had already so zealously espoused. Everywhere he went Knox seemed to win new trophies for Christ and the truth. Before leaving he wrote a circular letter to the brethren among whom he had laboured, urging them to a careful study of the Scriptures, and to attend to religious instruction and worship in their families, to meet at least once

a week for prayer, reading of the Word of God, and exhortation. He had no sympathy with a clerical monopoly of preaching, but claimed for all who had the gift of exhortation the right to instruct the brethren and preach the Gospel of salvation.

For two years and a half he enjoyed the society and friendship of Calvin and the other pastors of Geneva, and looked upon the Reformed Presbyterian Church there as "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on the earth since the days of the apostles."

However, his love for his country, and his enthusiasm in preaching to his countrymen, had in no wise abated. He kept up a constant correspondence with his brethren in Scotland, encouraging and counselling them in their arduous task of spreading the glad tidings of the Gospel. He maintained a firm faith that the cause was nearly won, and he was anxious to teach them to rely on God and the power of His Word rather than on him. In less than a year after his arrival at Geneva, the Earl of Glencairn, Lord Lorne, Lord Erskine, and Lord James Stuart, joined in urging him to return with all convenient speed. This he resolved to do; but on the way God found work for him to do in France, and he accomplished a great work in Dieppe. In the beginning of 1558 he returned to Geneva, and with other learned men translated the Bible into English. This translation is known as the Geneva Bible. It was frequently reprinted in England; and was much used by the translators of the present authorised version.

In July of this year the Protestant barons assembled in Edinburgh, and drew up a memorial to the queen-regent to restrain the violence of the clergy, and to correct flagrant abuses in the Church, and to protect the reformed preachers. This she cordially agreed to do. The way was now open for the reformer; and in May, 1559, he returned to complete the work of reformation.

CHAPTER XV.

JOHN KNOX AND THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION.—

Continued.

“Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets ; for God hath avenged you on her.”—REV. xviii. 20

IMMEDIATELY previous to Knox's arrival in Scotland to complete the work of Reforming the Church, several events occurred which served to prepare the way for his reception by the masses of the people. Persecution in its fiercest form had gradually subsided during the past few years, under the influence and counsel of several of the leading noblemen ; and there was nothing to stir up the indignation of the people to that pitch which was necessary for a final and national breach with the Romish Church. But now Rome herself was permitted in her mad course to place the last weight upon the tottering edifice, which crushed it to the earth. Walter Mill, an aged and venerable priest, bowed down by the weight of fourscore years, who had been condemned as a heretic some years previously by Cardinal Beaton, but had effected his escape, was discovered by the spies of Archbishop Hamilton, and

arrainged for trial. Feeble with age, and worn out by hardships, his appearance and spirited defence touched the hearts of all who saw and heard him. That such an innocent and harmless old man should be condemned to the flames by the Romish hierarchy so shocked the sensibilities of the people, that they turned away in disgust from the revolting scene, vowing to wash their hands from all complicity in such brutal deeds, by lifting up their testimony against that monster of iniquity by whose authority such infamous murders were perpetrated. Public feeling rose to such a height in St. Andrews, that the clergy could find no secular judge to confirm their sentence of death, so that their dastardly deed was legally as well as morally an act of murder. No one in the town could be prevailed upon to sell or give a rope to bind the venerable martyr to the stake, so that the archbishop had to provide a cord himself to complete the fiendish work. When pushed forward upon the burning pile, the good man raised his eyes to heaven, and said, with a cheerful voice: "I will go unto the altar of God. As for me, I am fourscore years old, and could not have lived long in the ordinary course of nature; but a hundred better shall arise out of the ashes of my bones. I trust in God I shall be the last to suffer death in Scotland for this cause." Thus died the aged martyr, on 28th August, 1558; and his death was the death-knell of popery in Scotland. This barbarous deed stirred the heart of the nation to its lowest depths. The people of St. Andrews reared an

immense heap of stones upon the spot where the martyr was burned ; and, as often as the clergy had the heap removed, the people by the next morning restored the silent memorial.

On St. Giles' Day the same year, the people of Edinburgh had an opportunity of giving expression to their pent-up feelings regarding "the Romish harlot." St. Giles was the patron saint of Edinburgh ; and on his festival it was customary to carry his image in front of the procession through the town. But when the day arrived the saint was missing, and could nowhere be found. A smaller image was obtained from Greyfriars Church, whom the people derisively designated "Young St. Giles." During the procession a number of young men offered to relieve the bearers of the image, and in a few minutes young St. Giles was lying in fragments on the streets. This was the signal for attacking the procession. The priests in alarm doffed their surplices and took to flight. No personal violence was offered to them ; but never again did the Romish clergy dare to head a procession in the streets of Edinburgh. Some years previously Knox had won over the nobles to the reformed cause. Now the people are turning away *en masse* from the apostate Church of Rome. This was the hopeful condition of the country when John Knox returned from Geneva, in May, 1559. Elizabeth was now on the throne of England, having succeeded her sister Mary, in November, 1558, and many refugees from the persecution of Mary now returned to England, so that

Knox could the more easily take his final leave of the English congregation at Geneva.

The queen-regent, who had made fair promises to the Protestants, and declined openly to countenance persecution, had in November, 1558, obtained the sanction of Parliament, recognising her son-in-law, the husband of Mary and heir to the throne of France, as entitled to succeed, as joint ruler with Mary, to the throne of Scotland. He became king of France in July, 1559, but died before Mary succeeded to the throne of Scotland, 19th August, 1561. Having gained her object, she now threw off the mask and appeared in her true colours, as a bigoted and persecuting Romanist, and publicly avowed her determination to stamp out the Reformation. In this enterprise, however, she reckoned without her host. Still she determined to make the attempt. Her brothers in France, the princes of Lorraine, had, at the instigation of the pope, formed a conspiracy to dethrone Elizabeth, and secure England and Scotland to the pope. The queen-regent, being supplied with French troops, declared to the nobles and barons that, "in spite of them all, their preachers should be banished from Scotland, although they should preach as well as the Apostle Paul." This bold declaration served to put the nobles on the defensive. They now knew with whom they had to reckon. They remonstrated with the regent, reminding her of her promise to protect the preachers. With that duplicity which only Romish casuistry attempts to justify, she sullenly replied, "It becomes not subjects

to burden princes with promises further than they please to keep them." A proclamation was at once issued forbidding any person to preach without obtaining authority from the bishops. Many of the Protestant preachers paid no attention to the prohibition; and four of their number, John Christison, William Harlaw, Paul Methven, and John Willock, were summoned to stand trial at Stirling, for usurping the ministerial office, and dispensing the sacrament of the Supper in a manner differing from the rites of the Catholic Church. Their trial was fixed for the tenth of May.

The Earl of Glencairn and Sir Hugh Campbell, sheriff of Ayr, warned the regent of the danger to which she was exposing herself, and pointedly informed her that, if she did not consider herself bound by her engagements to the nobles and Parliament, she, by her own act, absolved them from their allegiance to her, and that she must be prepared to take the consequence. Feeling strong in the promised aid of French troops, and annoyed that the reformed religion had been set up in Perth, Dundee, and other towns against her commands, she allowed the trial to proceed. However, before the 10th of May arrived, John Knox arrived upon the scene. His arrival created a greater panic among the Romish hierarchy than if an army had appeared, commissioned to overturn their whole system. They were assembled in council when a messenger announced that he had landed at Leith the previous day. The clergy were panic-stricken. The

council broke up in confusion. A message was sent to the queen-regent, and John Knox was immediately proclaimed a rebel and an outlaw.

Nothing daunted by such proceedings, the fearless reformer determined to present himself at Stirling on the day of trial. Spending only one day in Edinburgh, he hastened to Dundee, where many of the principal Protestants had assembled, for the purpose of accompanying their ministers to the trial. Lest the arrival of such a large company might be misunderstood, or interpreted as a hostile demonstration, they took measures to acquaint the queen of their peaceable intentions. Fearing that she could not secure the condemnation of the ministers, if they were supported by such a large following, she again had recourse to deception and falsehood. She persuaded Erskine, the bearer of the message, to write to the Protestants, requesting them to return to their homes, commissioning him to promise them, in her name, that she would not proceed with the trial. The Protestants, trusting to the promise they had received, returned to their homes; but when the day of trial came, the perfidious regent ordered the summons to be called, and the preachers in their absence were condemned and outlawed, and their bondsmen, who had given securities for their attendance, were compelled to pay the fines.

While the Protestants were assembled at Perth, Knox preached a sermon condemning image-worship and the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass. When the congregation had dispersed, an impudent priest, wish-

ing to show his contempt for Knox's doctrine, commenced to celebrate mass in the presence of a few idle loiterers who were standing about. Some irreverent action on the part of a boy caused the passionate priest to strike him. The boy retaliated by throwing a stone at the priest, which missed its mark and broke one of the images. In a few minutes all the images and ornaments in the church were thrown down and dashed to pieces. A mob of the lowest of the people, whom Knox calls "the rascal multitude," soon assembled and attacked the monastery, and laid the stately edifice in ruins. The preachers and the magistrates did all in their power to restrain the fury of the mob, but all to no purpose. Roman Catholic writers have never ceased to charge Knox with such excesses as these, whereas he did all in his power to prevent them. The queen-regent, by her treachery and duplicity, was the cause of stirring up the passions of the multitude on this and similar occasions.

The Protestants were now convinced that the queen and her advisers would not be satisfied with anything less than the utter suppression of the Reformation, and they laid their plans accordingly. They took active steps to get all who were friendly to the reformed cause to sign the covenant, by which they renounced popery, and pledged themselves to unite for the support and defence of the true religion. Prominent among the signatories of this covenant were the Earls of Argyle, Glencairn, Monteith, and Rothes; Lords Ochiltree, Boyd, Ruthven, and James Stuart, the prior

of St. Andrews ; and among the lesser barons, those of Angus, Carrick, Cunningham, Fife, Galloway, Kyle, Mearns, Monteith, and Strathearn.

The Lords of the Congregation, as the leaders of the Protestants were now called, satisfied that the queen-regent had determined on extreme measures, prepared for self-defence, and determined to shake off the shackles of Rome at once and for ever. They resolved to set up the reformed religion and abolish popery wherever their authority and influence extended; and in those feudal times their authority was paramount in their own districts.* They had also the cordial sympathy of the people, who persisted in demanding reformation. They decided to commence the work of reformation at St. Andrews.

The Earl of Argyle and Lord James Stuart invited Knox to meet them there on the 9th of June. Passing through Anstruther and Crail on his way, Knox preached to the people, warning them of the imminent danger to which they were exposed by the presence of French troops in the kingdom, brought over by the queen-regent to rivet upon them the chains of popery, and urging them to be ready either to die in defence of their rights and their religion, or to live as Christ's freemen. The regent with her French troops was at Falkland, only twelve miles from St. Andrews. This emboldened the archbishop to offer opposition to Knox. He assembled a force, and informed the Lords that if Knox attempted to preach in the cathedral, he would cause him "to be saluted with a dozen culverins,

whereof the most part would alight on his nose.' Fearing that the bloodthirsty archbishop would not fail to fulfil his threat, the Lords agreed that Knox should be asked to refrain from preaching on the following day, as they believed it would be only to court certain death. The heroic Knox, however, strong in faith and assured of Divine protection, would not listen to their entreaties. When God calls a man to be a hero in His cause, the way to avoid danger is to face it, the way to overcome the malice of evil men is to defy them and do your duty. Knox was not reckless, but he was brave. He feared no man when he heard the voice of God's Spirit within saying, "Go forward." "My life," said he, "is in the hand of Him whose glory I seek, I ask no man to defend me." The next day, being the Sabbath, the noble, heroic preacher of Christ's Gospel entered the pulpit and preached to a large congregation. Many of the clergy were present, but no one attempted to molest him. He took for his text the words of Christ, so appropriate to the occasion: "My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves," and fearlessly attacked and exposed the scandalous corruptions and abuses of the Romish Church. On the three following days he addressed large assemblies in St. Andrews. His reasoning was so powerful and persuasive, that the provost, magistrates, and people at once agreed to abolish popery and introduce the reformed worship. The churches were immediately cleared of all the images and pictures, and the

monasteries were reduced to ruins. This decisive step was taken on 14th June, 1559.

The Protestants of Angus rose in a body, and hastened to defend them from the attack of the queen and her foreign army. They assembled in such numbers on Cupar Moor that the queen was compelled to come to terms, promising to withdraw her French troops from Fife, and to send commissioners to St. Andrews to grant the demands of the Protestants. The troops were withdrawn, but no commissioners appeared to grant the promised reforms. Instead of this, the treacherous queen set about fortifying the Forth at Stirling, to cut off their communication with the Protestants in the south. Being informed of the queen's design, they hastened to defeat her plans. Marching through Perth, they dismissed the garrison and pressed on to Stirling and seized the castle. On they march to Edinburgh, driving the queen from the capital, compelling her to retire to Dunbar. The reformers are triumphant all along the march ; and in a few weeks, at Crail, Cupar, Perth, Scone, Stirling, Cambuskenneth, Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other places, the images and altars are solemnly burned, and the monasteries, and " whatsoever carried any symbol of the Roman harlot," are pulled down and destroyed. The churches and cathedrals were not injured ; but the monasteries and everything connected with the Romish superstition were utterly demolished, so great was the zeal of the reformers in purifying the Church.

There was much practical wisdom in the instructions

given by Knox in reference to the monasteries: "Down with these crow-nests, else the crows will *big* (build) in them again." He was shrewd enough to know that if the Reformation was to be permanent it must be thorough. In this he showed much more practical wisdom than the English reformers in the time of Edward VI. They resolved to proceed gradually; and in doing so they lost all in a few years, and their own heads besides, and never were they able to carry out a thorough reform in ritual, much of the Romish ritual being retained. Knox was by far the greatest statesman of the Reformation; and it was owing principally to his high state-manlike qualities that the Reformation secured such permanent blessing and ecclesiastical peace to Scotland, while the partial reformation in England became a source of perpetual discord, and eventually brought about the alienation and formal separation of the noble and godly Puritans from the Established Church, and necessitated the rise of Non-conformity in England.

The Reformation in Scotland differed in another important aspect from the Reformation in England. In England the movement originated with the king and Parliament, so that the Reformed Church became a State institution rather than the Church of the people. In Scotland the nobles and the people were first won over to the Protestant faith, and abolished Romanism in spite of the ruling powers. Thus the whole nation was enthusiastically attached to the reformed religion before it was formally established by Parliament.

The reformers made no attempt to throw off their allegiance to the queen-regent; and, on granting liberty of worship, she was allowed to return to the capital. The reformed worship was set up in Edinburgh, but the queen was allowed to have the Romish ritual in Holyrood and the royal chapel. Protestant pastors were settled also in Ayr, St. Andrews, Dundee, Perth, Stirling, Brechin, and Montrose, as early as August, 1559—less than five months after Knox arrived from Geneva. In less than two months from this date, Knox, with all his accustomed energy and zeal, traversed the greater part of Scotland, and by his stirring eloquence roused the whole nation. Having once tasted the refreshing waters of the river of life, they eagerly longed for a constant supply. This could only be had from the Word of God and the Protestant preachers. Owing to the scarcity of qualified ministers, many towns had to be content with occasional supply from Knox and others. Still the good work went on increasing.

The fanatical and faithless queen-regent, smarting under her recent defeat, notwithstanding her promises to grant freedom of worship to the Protestants, applied to France for more troops, in order to crush the Reformation. So soon as this treachery became known, Knox and the Lords of the Congregation applied to England for assistance. Elizabeth, anxious to preserve harmonious relations with France, hesitated to grant the assistance they craved. However, her counsellors prevailed; and, by the aid of a small English force,

the French soldiers of the regent were expelled from the country in the beginning of the year 1560. During the progress of these events, an assembly, consisting of the nobles, barons, and representatives of boroughs, together with Knox, Gordon, Bishop of Galloway, Goodman, minister of Ayr, and Willock, minister of Edinburgh, met in October, 1559, and solemnly deposed the regent, on account of persistent duplicity and treachery, until the meeting of a free Parliament; and elected a council to manage the affairs of the nation. The Protestants were now in authority, and comprised the great majority of the nobles and the people. The Romish worship was forsaken, and the reformed service was introduced in every part of the kingdom.

Parliament assembled on the 1st of August, 1560, and requested the reformed ministers to prepare a summary of doctrine, which they could prove to be agreeable to Scripture. They drew up a Confession of Faith in twenty-five articles, embracing the fundamental points of Christian doctrine. This Confession was approved by Parliament, only three lords dissenting. They gave as their only reason of dissent that "they would believe as their forefathers believed." Thus the Protestant worship and doctrine were set up in Scotland by Act of Parliament on 17th August, 1560. On the 24th of August an Act was passed abolishing the pope's authority, and prohibiting the celebration of mass, and rescinding all former laws passed in support of the Roman Catholic Church and against the Protestant faith.

The Scottish reformers deserve great credit for their patience and forbearance with all offenders. Although the mass was said by several priests after it was prohibited on the pain of death, yet, while the offenders were punished, not a single papist suffered death in Scotland for his religious opinions. The only further step necessary to complete the work of reformation was the adoption of a Scriptural form of government for the Church. Knox and four other ministers were commissioned to draw up a plan of government in accordance with the practice of the Church in the time of the apostles. This form of government, known as the "First Book of Discipline," was approved by the General Assembly in December of the same year, and was subscribed by a large number of the nobility, barons, and representatives in Parliament.

The constitution of the Reformed Scottish Church was purely Presbyterian, with the same office-bearers and church courts, and the same evangelical doctrine, found in all Presbyterian Churches at the present day.

CHAPTER XVI.

JOHN KNOX AND MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”—1 COR. xiv. 40.

THE Presbyterian form of government set up in the National Reformed Church of Scotland was adopted directly from Scripture. Dr. Row, one of the four associated with Knox in drawing up the First Book of Discipline, or Church Polity, says they “took not their example from any Church in the world,” but immediately from the Word of God and the practice of the apostles. Both in doctrine and in government the Scottish reformers were determined to be guided by the inspired Word of God alone. And this has proved to be one of the strongest points in the Scottish Reformation.

Their first grand aim was to secure pure evangelical doctrine and the faithful preaching of the Gospel. Their next concern was to set up a Scriptural form of government, securing the rights of pastors and people against all hierarchical pretensions. They insisted that Christ was the only Head of the Church—that no bishop nor king could arrogate to Himself this claim without doing dishonour to Christ. They rejected the

various grades and orders of the clergy found in all Episcopal Churches, insisting upon the equality of all ministers of the Word, thus carrying out the instructions of Christ Himself to the apostles: "ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN."

Another important reform insisted upon was the right of the people to choose and elect their ministers. In this way unworthy and incompetent men were excluded from the ministry. If their manner of life, doctrine, and preaching powers were not such as to command the approval of the people, their entrance to the sacred office of the ministry was barred on the threshold. The congregation also elected elders, who were associated with the pastor in a general superintendence of the spiritual affairs of the Church. Deacons were also elected by the congregation, who were associated with the minister and elders in managing the financial affairs of the Church, and in making provision for the poor. The Presbytery, Provincial Synod, and General Assembly, each composed of an equal number of ministers and elders, met at stated times to legislate on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the Church, an appeal always being allowed from the lower to the higher courts, the decision of the highest court being final. In this way the highest talent and wisdom of the whole Church were brought to bear upon all matters of importance, and contributed very much to sound legislation. In this respect Presbytery had a great advantage over Episcopacy. However eminent a single bishop might be for wisdom and

prudence, it is quite impossible that he could bring the same amount of skill and special knowledge to bear upon all questions coming before him as could be brought by a body of eminent representative men; nor could his decision, however impartially given, carry the same weight or inspire the same confidence as the deliberate decision of a large body of ministers and elders. Presbytery, also, with its equal representation of lay elders, provided a sure guarantee against priestly domination. The history of Episcopal Churches, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, has proved that, where the sole authority is invested in bishops and the clergy, intolerance has prevailed, and the people have been denied those rights which the Word of God claims for all true believers. Hence, Episcopal Churches have never been able to keep hold of thoughtful men who think deeply on religious and ecclesiastical questions. Therefore, John Knox and his fellow-labourers did a great work, not only for Scotland, but for Christendom, when they insisted on reforming the Church, not only in doctrine and in ritual, but in government as well, constituting the Reformed Church simply and solely on the model laid down in the Word of God.

From its first inception, the Reformed Church of Scotland was pre-eminently the Church of the people, and by giving the people a fair share in the management and government of the Church, their interest and cordial support were secured. Hence, in all countries the Presbyterian Church has been the friend

of the people, and the persistent advocate of religious equality and civil liberty.

In matters of ritual, the sign of the cross in baptism and kneeling at the Lord's Supper were abolished as unscriptural and savouring of popery. In towns, in addition to the Sabbath services, a sermon was preached on one week-day at least. The Lord's Supper was dispensed four times a year in towns, there being two communion services—one in the morning and another in the evening—that all might be able to attend. In country districts the ordinance was observed less frequently, usually twice a year.

The reformers also paid particular attention to education. A school was erected in every parish for instructing children in religion, grammar, and Latin. In order to promote higher education, colleges were established in the principal towns, where instruction was given in logic, philosophy, and the learned languages. The three national universities were also liberally provided for, and equipped with competent professors. Thus it will be seen that the Reformation had a powerful effect upon learning and literature. The aim of the papacy was to keep the people in ignorance and darkness. The aim of the reformers was to diffuse light and knowledge, and stir up the human mind to think and investigate and search for truth. In other countries the revival of literature preceded the Reformation, and was the prime factor in bringing it about. In Scotland learning and literature followed in the wake of the Reformation. In

literature and in art, as well as in religion, the Reformation was a great boon and blessing to Scotland. The first school for teaching Hebrew in Scotland was established at this time, Dr. Row being the first professor. Such was the estimate set upon education by the reformers and the provision they made for it.

On the 20th of December, 1560, the first General Assembly of the Reformed Church, consisting of forty members, met at Edinburgh. After sermon and prayer, the first business was the report and investigation of the conduct of ministers and superintendents. Each member retired in turn, and an opportunity was given to those present to point out any negligence or defects in the performance of ministerial duty. If any were found negligent in their duties, they were admonished and enjoined to be more diligent and circumspect in the future. This ancient practice has fallen into disuse in modern Presbyterian Churches, discipline being exercised by the presbyteries at their monthly meetings. Wesley, however, adopted it, and it still forms a part of the proceedings at the annual Conference of the Wesleyan Church.

Under the papacy the clergy were a privileged class, against whom it was next to impossible to sustain an accusation, as many as seventy-two witnesses being required to convict a priest of any crime. Hence it followed that the clergy became notoriously corrupt and guilty of the most abominable vices; and there was no power in the Church that could restrain their licentiousness. Knox and the

reformers were determined to make such scandalous conduct impossible in the future, by making every minister amenable to the Assembly for the faithful discharge of his duties. This deliberate action on the part of the members of the Assembly proves conclusively their purity of motive and earnestness of purpose, as well as their zeal for the overthrow of the papacy.

The Church has now been purified and consecrated. But as in the case of the individual Christian, so it is with the Church—trial follows closely upon consecration. So the young Church has to be tried.

On the death of Francis I., husband of Mary Queen of Scots, who had succeeded to the throne of France in July, 1559, the Protestant nobility of Scotland sent an invitation to their young queen to return to Scotland and assume the reins of government. In response to this invitation she arrived in Scotland, on 19th August, 1561. Her French education and Roman Catholic training totally unfitted her for governing Scotland in the present state of affairs. Scotland was terribly in earnest in religious matters. The First Book of Discipline was intended to reform and restrain the lives of all communicants, nobility as well as clergy, and even royalty was not exempt from admonition and reproof. Brought up in the most luxurious court of Europe where the vices of monarchs were regarded as matters of privilege, and where beauty and fascinating manners passed for virtue, and wholly unaccustomed to the restraints imposed by religion, she could not brook

the restraints that Scottish religious life imposed upon her. Deeply prejudiced against the reformers through the influence of her uncle, the Cardinal of Lorraine, she was persuaded that the glory of her reign would consist in bringing back her Protestant subjects to the Roman Catholic faith. She thus became the willing dupe of a deep-laid scheme for the total suppression of the Reformation in England and Scotland. She was to be supported in her endeavours by the popish princes on the Continent. If her subjects resisted her will in setting up the Roman Catholic religion, they were to be silenced by French soldiers. When Scotland was subdued to the pope, she was to be rewarded by having the crown of England placed upon her head. Queen Elizabeth was to be got rid of by a popish plot; and Mary, as next heir to the throne, was to take her place and rule over both countries. By such foul means the pope sought to stamp out the Reformation in England and Scotland. That this base conspiracy was deliberately planned under the sanction of the pope, and formed a part of the fixed policy of Rome, is proved by the following letter from Pope Pius V. to the Catholic King, Philip II. of Spain, dated 28th June, 1570:—"Our dear son, Robert Ridolfi, will explain, God willing, to your majesty certain matters which concern not a little the honour of Almighty God. We conjure your majesty to take into serious consideration the proposals which he will place before you, and to furnish him with all the means

your majesty may judge most suitable for its execution." The communication with which the pope's "dear son" was entrusted was, "that it was proposed to kill Queen Elizabeth; that the attempt would not be made in London, because it was the seat of heresy, but during one of her journeys; and that a certain James G—— would undertake it." The same day the council assembled, and Philip declared his willingness to undertake the work of assassination. His ministers hinted to the pope's ambassador that, as it would be an expensive business, the pope would be expected to furnish the money.

It was under such fiendish counsel and such wicked auspices that the beautiful but unfortunate Queen of Scots commenced her reign. A merciful Providence preserved Queen Elizabeth to a long and useful reign full of blessing to the nation, while the ambitious and unscrupulous Mary lost her crown, and paid the penalty of her intrigues with her life. Superficial writers animadvert most severely upon Elizabeth for consenting to the execution of her beautiful rival. However, a knowledge of all the circumstances must greatly modify such opinions. It were better, indeed, if England's noble queen had been able to devise means for securing her own safety, and the stability of her throne, without having recourse to bloodshed; but it must be admitted that, so long as Mary Queen of Scots was a rival for the crown of England, and a plotting, murderous pope controlled the counsels of the Vatican and the armies of France and Spain,

Elizabeth's life was not safe for a moment, so that her consent to the execution of Mary was in a large measure an act of self-defence.

The young Queen of Scots was accorded a flattering reception on her arrival; but she soon excited great alarm by directing that a solemn mass should be celebrated in Holyrood Chapel on the next Sabbath. This service had been prohibited by Act of Parliament, and had not been performed since the civil war. The zeal of the multitude for the reformed faith had almost burst into open insurrection; but more moderate counsels prevailed. On the following Sabbath, the faithful and fearless reformer preached against the evils of idolatry, and concluded by declaring that "one mass was more fearful to him than if ten thousand armed men had landed in the kingdom to suppress their whole religion." The queen sent for Knox, in the hope, no doubt, of silencing him, either by flattering words or by asserting her authority. She argued with him in the presence of her brother, Lord James Stuart; but his firmness and courage in opposing her arguments gave her to understand, once for all, that there was one at least in Scotland who could be neither flattered nor cajoled into a concurrence with her bold designs. She charged him with having set up a religion different from that allowed by former kings. He replied by proclaiming that people derived their religion direct from God, and not from princes; and answered all her arguments so conclusively that she remained silent for a long time, and then said,

“Well, I perceive my subjects shall obey you, and not me.” “God forbid,” he replied; “my desire is that both princes and subjects should obey God; yea, and God commands kings to be foster-fathers to the Kirk, and queens to be nursing-mothers.” To this she replied, “Yea, but ye are not the Kirk that I will nourish. I will defend the Kirk of Rome; for it, I think, is the true Kirk of God.” “Your will, madam, is no reason; neither does your thought make that Roman harlot to be the true and immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ. Wonder not that I call Rome a harlot, for that Church is altogether polluted with all kinds of spiritual fornication, both in doctrine and in manners.” In closing this conversation Knox showed his loyalty and goodwill in the following beautiful and touching words: “I pray God, madam, that you may be as blessed within the commonwealth of Scotland as ever Deborah was in the commonwealth of Israel.”

Although the queen, by all her arts and arguments, could not make the faithful reformer swerve in the slightest degree from the path of duty, yet by fair words and flattery she succeeded in damping the ardour of some of the nobles. The courtiers, through her influence, absented themselves from the first meeting of the General Assembly held after her arrival; and when their action was called in question, they argued against the propriety of holding assemblies without Her Majesty's pleasure. “Take from us the liberty of Assemblies,” said Knox, “and you will soon take from us the liberty of preaching the Gospel.” It

was well for Scotland at this crisis in her history that there was at least one brave heroic servant of God, who, like Elijah, feared not to stand up for God and His Word against courtiers and princes.

Knox was the only minister located in Edinburgh at this time, the other reformed preachers being settled in other parts of the kingdom. St. Giles' was the only church, but it was capable of seating 3000 people. Knox's eloquence made an immense impression upon the assembled multitude, and their zeal was not allowed to cool down; but many of the nobles offered no opposition to the intrigues of the queen. The chief direction of affairs was entrusted to her brother, Lord James Stuart, who was created Earl of Murray in 1562. So long as he was at the head of affairs the Protestant religion was safe and the people were not alarmed. The popish clergy, knowing that they possessed the sympathies of the queen, commenced to preach in different parts of the country, and Knox and others had public disputations with some of them. Measures, however, were promptly taken by many of the leading noblemen to put down popery in their own districts, the queen apparently assenting to have the law enforced. She was now meditating marriage with Lord Darnley, and did not wish to stir up opposition from any quarter. Knox, however, seeing the danger that would result from her union with a low-born, bigoted papist, protested against the marriage. This protest gave mortal offence to the queen, and he was summoned into her presence; but he showed the

same firmness as on former occasions, and would yield neither to her arguments nor to her tears. This stern fidelity to duty on the part of the reformer she never forgave, and she vowed to have vengeance upon him.

Knox lost his first wife in December, 1560, and in March, 1564, he married Margaret Stewart, daughter of Lord Ochiltree, a noble lord who had for many years been a devoted supporter of the Reformation. Like his first wife, Marjory Bowes, she proved to be in every way worthy of her distinguished husband, waiting upon him in his last illness with singular affection and assiduity.

In July, 1565, without the consent of Parliament, the queen solemnized the nuptials between herself and Darnley, and proclaimed her husband king. This rash and illegal proceeding created intense dissatisfaction. Many who could quietly endure her religion, would not brook such a high-handed proceeding as this. The Earl of Murray declined to sanction the proceedings, and while other opposing lords were compelled to take refuge in England, he, by leave of the queen, took up his residence in France.

The queen, however, soon became disgusted with Darnley, and yielding to the influence of the Earl of Bothwell, she had him decoyed to a house in a retired part of Edinburgh, which was blown up with gunpowder on 10th February, 1567. His dead body was found in a field close by. The murder was traced to Bothwell, and suspicion at once fell upon the queen as an accomplice. These suspicions were confirmed,

and the nation was horrified by her marriage with Bothwell shortly after. These dastardly transactions soon brought her government to an end. She was arrested and imprisoned, and compelled to abdicate the throne. The infant prince, James VI., was crowned at Stirling on 29th July, 1567. Knox preached the sermon at the coronation and placed the crown on his head. The queen was placed in "durance vile" in the castle of Lochleven.

Lord James Stuart, Earl of Murray, was appointed regent of the kingdom during the minority of James VI. He at once, with great wisdom and prudence, undertook to settle the affairs of the Church on a satisfactory basis. He assembled Parliament in the middle of December. Knox preached the opening sermon, and urged that the affairs of the Church should first be settled. All the Acts passed in 1560, establishing the Protestant religion, were confirmed. A new law was passed enacting that no prince should receive the crown of Scotland without taking a solemn oath to maintain the Protestant religion. The jurisdiction of the Church in all matters spiritual was formally ratified, making it illegal for the State to interfere with the Church in any matter coming within its jurisdiction. Thus papal supremacy and ecclesiastical tyranny were abolished. The Protestant religion was established on a firm basis; and the Presbyterian polity, or government by elders and not by bishops, was made the law of the Church. The Earl of Murray, gratefully remembered as the Good Regent, and one of

Knox's earliest converts, deserves to have his name immortalised for the noble part he performed in bringing about this happy settlement of ecclesiastical affairs.

On the 2nd of May, 1568, after nearly a year's confinement, Mary effected her escape from Lochleven in disguise. A party of disaffected nobles rallied round her with the object of restoring her to the throne. This insurrection was promptly suppressed by the regent, and Mary took refuge in England. A man of exemplary piety and untarnished reputation, successful in quelling revolts, impartial and firm in the administration of justice, generous and merciful towards the vanquished, the name of the Good Regent became a household word in the kingdom.

The Archbishop of St Andrews and other bigoted papists laid plots to take his life. Eventually, on the 23rd January, 1570, a nephew of the archbishop, whom the regent had pardoned after having forfeited his life, basely assassinated him as he rode through the streets of Linlithgow. The archbishop confessed on the scaffold, before his execution, that he was one of the promoters of this dastardly deed. Knox regarded the regent's death as the greatest calamity that could have befallen the nation; and he never recovered from the shock which he sustained on receiving the sad intelligence of the untimely death of his dear and noble friend, who had done so much for Scotland. Knox preached his funeral sermon in St. Giles', from the text, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." While he portrayed the life and virtues and services

of the Good Regent, three thousand people were bathed in tears, and the whole nation bewailed their irreparable loss.

Shortly afterwards, Knox had a stroke of apoplexy from which he never entirely recovered; and during the latter days of his ministry he had to be helped into the pulpit, but seldom left it without warming up to his accustomed energy and eloquence. His failing strength prevented him from taking further part in public affairs. However, he had done his work, and had done it well. The Reformed Church of Scotland, which has proved such a boon to the nation and such a blessing to the world, is his memorial and monument. His name is still fragrant in the memory of all good men, as a true, heroic servant of God, seeking no earthly fame or glory, concerned only for the honour of Christ and the salvation of souls. Three centuries have passed away, and the lustre of his name is not dimmed. The Presbyterian Church, with the ecclesiastical polity for which he so earnestly contended, and which is so closely associated with his name, stands forth to-day the largest, freest, and most influential of all the Protestant Churches in Christendom.

On the 24th of November, 1572, John Knox peacefully fell asleep in Jesus. His funeral was attended by all the nobility in the city, and a vast multitude of people. Standing over his grave, the Earl of Morton, the newly-elected regent, pronounced over him a noble eulogy that found a response in every heart: "There lies he who never feared the face of man."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RISE OF THE PURITANS.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”—
ECCLES. ix. 10.

THE English Reformation had one great defect, which also proved to be a constant source of weakness—a want of thoroughness. Founded on a compromise, instead of on the Word of God, both in government and in ritual, it has always failed to give satisfaction to many in the Church. Henry VIII. broke only a single strand of the cord that bound England to the Roman Catholic faith. He rejected the supremacy of the pope, and constituted himself the head of the Church; but in doctrine and in ritual he clung to the Romish order. Neither reformers nor papists received any favour at his hands. He showed his zeal for himself and for the Church of which he was the head, by burning as heretics the Protestants who agitated for reform in doctrine and in ritual, and by hanging as traitors those who dared to acknowledge the supremacy of the pope. Henry was neither Protestant nor Papist, and the religious system which he introduced died with him. It had in itself no power of perpetuation.

The reform introduced by Edward VI. and his judicious counsellors was much more thorough. It undertook to correct both doctrine and ritual. It failed, however, through excessive caution and procrastination. Error, like sin, cannot be dealt with by any gradual process. It must be cast out entirely and at once. Any other method is but to court failure and defeat. In the early death of the good Edward the voice of Providence seemed to say to the reformers, "Time is short; what you do, do quickly." By failing to strike quickly and firmly they lost all the ground they had gained, and also lost an opportunity for thoroughly reforming the Church which never returned.

Elizabeth, on her accession, declared in favour of the Protestant faith; but she was never able wholly to set herself free from her prejudices in favour of a gorgeous ceremonial. She and the leading reformers had only one thing in common—an intense aversion to the papal power. The Protestants in England were in entire sympathy with their brethren in Scotland and on the Continent, and were anxious to follow in their footsteps in thoroughly reforming the Church, and setting up a government and discipline entirely upon the model of Scripture. They felt a strong repugnance to many of the ceremonies which the queen would not consent to forego—the use of the surplice and other vestments, the sign of the cross in baptism, kneeling at the sacrament, saints' days, and baptismal regeneration as set forth in the service.

The retention of these unscriptural rites and ceremonies, avowedly to conciliate the Roman Catholics, could not fail to alienate from the Established Church the great body of thorough-going reformers. They demanded a Scriptural form of worship and government, pure and simple. Hence they came to be called Puritans.

Here, then, were two distinct and powerful parties in the nation, the Catholics and the Puritans. The queen and the archbishop, adopting a worldly policy, determined to take a middle course, judging it to be the most politic under existing circumstances. This compromise is apparent both in government and in ritual. The articles relating to doctrine and the discourses, being composed by Protestants, are thoroughly in harmony with the teaching of Calvin and Knox; while the prayers and thanksgivings, being largely derived from the Roman Catholic breviaries, are strongly flavoured with popery.

The Romish Church regarded the episcopal office as of Divine appointment, and that the graces of the Holy Spirit were conveyed and transmitted by the imposition of hands at ordination in an unbroken succession from the time of the apostles. The leading reformers, like the reformers in every other country, denied that there was any Scriptural authority either for prelacy or apostolical succession. In the primitive Church, the government was Presbyterian. All presbyters were bishops in the true sense of the word as being overseers of the flock; but there were no bishops

in the modern prelatical sense of the word. Then there was no hierarchy in the Church.

The Puritans contended that in government, as well as in doctrine, the Church should be founded upon the model of the apostolic Church as recorded in Scripture. They preferred the wisdom of God to the wisdom of man. The court party, however, maintained that Christian rulers might modify the polity of the Church, so as to accommodate it to the government of the State, and introduce into the services of the Church whatever rites and ceremonies they might deem useful and prudent. Hence they decided upon a middle course between a Scriptural simplicity and a gorgeous ceremonial. They retained Episcopacy, but did not declare it to be of Divine institution, or essential to the efficacy of the sacraments.

In doctrine and ritual also, the same attempt at compromise was apparent. While utterly disavowing the doctrine of transubstantiation, and condemning as idolatrous the adoration of the elements in the Lord's Supper, yet to the deep disgust of the Puritans, communicants were required to receive the memorials of the Saviour's dying love, "meekly kneeling upon their knees." While discarding a host of meaningless gestures, which in Roman Catholic worship take the place of instruction, the sign of the cross was retained, and certain positions and attitudes were allowed. The Roman Catholic invoked the intercession of the Virgin Mary and a long array of saints. The Puritans, in the rebound from such superstition, preferred to with-

hold the title of saint from even the apostles, lest it should seem to countenance in any degree the man-worship of Rome. The Church of England, although carefully avoiding the sanction of prayers addressed to the saints, still met the Catholic half-way by observing certain days in commemoration of those who were denominated saints. The confessional was abolished in name, and yet the dying were urged to confess their sins to a minister who was authorized to make a formal declaration of forgiveness, which was closely akin in spirit to the old form of absolution. The Puritans demanded that Christ alone should be recognised as the Head of the Church. This dignity the devout Catholic reverently ascribed to the pope. The Church of England, as the mediator between the two parties, invested the king with the disputed dignity; and thus, instead of reconciling Puritans and Catholics, only set up a third claimant for the honour. The appointment of bishops was entrusted to the civil power, although the office was pre-eminently spiritual. Convocation was assembled and dissolved, not by the authority of the Church, but by the authority of the prince.

No Church council could lawfully assemble without the consent of the Crown, and no canon or resolution of the Church had any force except it received the royal sanction. From all the ecclesiastical courts an appeal lay, in the last instance, to the sovereign. The Church in every particular was subordinated to the State. The place that the Puritans would

have accorded to Christ and the Word of God, and which Catholics would have given to the pope, the Church of England accorded to the sovereign. The contention of the Puritans, therefore, was no mere petty squabble about a few rites and ceremonies and vestments, indifferent in themselves, but a manly, resolute stand for the sole supremacy of Christ and the Scriptures. They refused to have ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies imposed upon them that had no sanction in the Word of God. By an almost super-human effort, the nations had risen in their might and had burst the bonds of human authority that had so long held them in bondage. They had asserted the right of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture. They had renounced the idea that the revealed Word of God must be received only as interpreted by the Church of Rome and the pope. They claimed that the Word of God ought to be placed in the hands of all men, and be accepted as the only rule of faith and duty, and that Christ was the only Head of the Church. For these principles they had struggled and suffered, and had come off victorious over former foes. At the peril of their lives they had set themselves free from the despotism of the Romish hierarchy. Must they, therefore, again submit to a new spiritual tyranny? Must they again acknowledge human authority, and submit their judgment and conscience to the uncertain and variable opinions of weak and fallible men? If the dignitaries of the Church, and the authorities in the State, were

entitled to reject ancient ceremonials on their own responsibility, and also to retain many superstitious rites and practices, and to introduce new changes with every new monarch, how could certainty and finality be attained? What was to be the ultimate authority—the final source of appeal? The Puritans' answer to this question was, The Word of God, and the Word of God alone. And it was the only possible answer. To admit that the products of human wisdom might be added to Scripture as the rule of faith, was but to adopt the Roman Catholic formula, which permitted the introduction of all the corruptions and abuses against which the reformers had protested. The grand question to be settled was, What is the standard by which all reform is to be regulated? The Puritans' answer is the right one, The Word of God and the practice of the apostles. They rightly insisted that the government and ritual of the Church should be reduced to the simplicity of apostolic times. They clearly foresaw the danger of establishing any rites and practices of merely human origin. They reasoned, as thoughtful men were compelled to reason, that since by the introduction of rites of merely human origin, the Church had become corrupted in past ages, similar results must eventually follow in the Reformed Church if any unscriptural practices were tolerated. For the honour of Christ, for the supremacy of the Word of God, for the right of private judgment, for the freedom of the Church, they resolutely took their stand; and having planted their foot upon such a rock, they were

not the men to yield. And because they would not yield they were persecuted. Persecution, however, only strengthened their cause. It enabled them to publish their principles, which only required to be known in order to be respected. It was soon evident that they could reckon on their side the vast majority of true-hearted Protestants. Of those who adhered to the courtly party, many were Roman Catholics at heart, who had conformed to the established religion as a matter of prudence. Others were men of no earnest convictions, who thought it best to adopt a worldly policy in the hope of uniting all parties under a more moderate ritual, and a less pretentious form of hierarchal government than were found in the Church which they had abandoned.

For a time the Aet of Uniformity was not rigidly enforced. Some ministers wore the clerical vestments; others officiated without them. Some ministers dispensed the sacrament to communicants kneeling, according to the rubric; other communicants received the elements sitting or standing, according to the preference of the minister. Some used the sign of the cross in baptism, others omitted it. Many of the bishops took no notice of these deviations from the prescribed order, as they themselves disapproved of the ceremonies. Others who did not object to the ceremonies in themselves, were decidedly against their compulsory enforcement. The Puritan party certainly had right and reason on their side, and they were growing stronger every day. They were rapidly

winning to their side the great body of those who could be regarded as sincere and loyal Protestants.

To restore uniformity and preserve unity, one of two methods might have been adopted. The obnoxious ceremonies might have been abolished, or conformity in things indifferent might have been left to the discretion of the officiating minister, so long as he did not transgress in the direction of Rome. However, another course was resolved upon. Archbishop Parker, with the concurrence of the queen, determined to enforce universal conformity. He stood almost alone among the hierarchy, nearly all of the bishops preferring to relax or modify the regulations, so as to remove the grounds of offence. In the beginning of the year 1565, it was determined that all irregularities in the services of the Church must terminate. The archbishop issued a code of regulations for the discipline of the clergy, enjoining strict conformity to the prescribed order. Anxious to show his power and determination, he at once summoned before the ecclesiastical commission two men of great eminence in the Church—Dean Sampson, who had refused a bishopric on account of the objectionable ceremonies, and Dr. Humphrey, president of Magdalen College, Oxford. This action, however, did not intimidate or silence the Puritan clergy. Conscious of their power and the popularity of their cause, and sustained by an earnest conviction that they were contending for the honour of Christ and the highest welfare of His Church, they determined to resist this harsh and arbitrary display of power by the

archbishop. The queen had refused to sanction the order which he had circulated among the clergy, so that it carried with it no legal authority. Now, however, he prevailed upon the queen to issue a proclamation insisting upon strict conformity in the use of vestments, and in the observance of the prescribed ceremonies. Out of ninety-eight ministers in London, thirty-seven refused to conform, and resigned their livings. These were by far the most talented and godly of the ministry in the metropolis. It was one of the saddest features in the history of the Church of England during the reign of Elizabeth, that the ministers, who were by arbitrary measures driven from the Church and ejected from their livings, were men of the highest character and of rare pulpit power, men full of holy zeal and strenuous endeavour for the salvation of souls; and the professedly Protestant Church of England, in her false zeal for upholding rites and practices unknown in the days of the apostles, was lopping off her own right arm in driving from her pale the best Protestants in the kingdom. The great majority of the clergy who readily conformed to the prescribed order had no religious convictions whatever. They laid aside their mass-books, and adopted the new liturgy from policy and not from conviction; and, if opportunity offered, they would gladly return to the Romish faith and the service of the mass. The greater part of these were men of little learning, and are described as being sunk in superstition and looseness of living. (Strype's "*Annals*," i. 166.) Under such

circumstances it seems almost incredible that a Protestant queen, intent upon establishing her throne against Roman Catholic conspiracy and intrigue, and anxious to build up a strong Protestant Church in the realm, should allow herself to be carried away by an arbitrary spirit, or to be influenced by the imperious counsels of Parker, so as to trample upon the rights of conscience, and persecute the very men who could secure the stability of the throne and be a tower of strength to the Church.

The first open act of persecution towards Protestant Nonconformists took place in June, 1567, when more than a hundred, who were taking part in a religious service at Plummer's Hall, were arrested, of whom fourteen or fifteen were sent to prison. Every candid mind ought to be free to admit that in a State Church, as in any other Church, ministers, and all who hold office in the Church, ought to conform to the discipline of the Church or honourably withdraw from it. But to persecute and imprison men for no other offence than quietly and peaceably worshipping God according to His Word, after they had ceased to hold office, is to trample upon human freedom, and brings dishonour upon the religion which such high-handed action is intended to promote.

It is due, however, to the best men in the Church, including several bishops, and to many of the leading men in the councils of the nation, to state that they had no sympathy with these harsh and oppressive measures. Grindal and Sandys, who were successively

bishops of London and archbishops of York, were known to be in cordial sympathy with the nonconforming ministers, for they themselves had conscientious scruples respecting the ceremonies. Parkhurst, Bishop of Norwich, and Pilkington, Bishop of Durham, had publicly espoused their cause. In the council, they had the powerful support of the Earl of Leicester, who had immense influence with the queen in other matters. Bedford, Warwick, and Huntingdon, known to be staunch Protestants and zealous for thorough reform; Bacon, Sadler, Walsingham, and Knollys, men of great wisdom and experience, were all opposed to the harsh treatment to which the Puritans were subjected, and claimed that the pre-eminent virtues of these ministers, and their great service to the Church, entitled them to much greater consideration and respect.

Until the year 1570, the agitation was directed against the superstitious ceremonies and unscriptural practices that had been retained in the Church. Now, however, that the queen and the archbishop, the two highest dignitaries in the Church, persisted in persecuting those who had for conscience sake yielded up all the temporal advantages derived from connection with the Established Church, they began to see, in a new light, the danger of transferring the authority that rightfully belongs to the Church to a few individuals, however high their station. They had in their own treatment a practical proof that a clerical hierarchy, that is in no way dependent upon the

people, naturally becomes intolerant, and does not scruple to trample upon the rights and liberties of others. The intolerance from which they suffered convinced them that the Episcopal form of government was not only unscriptural, but subversive of liberty.

In this year Dr. Cartwright, professor of divinity at Cambridge, began to advocate that the only lawful form of Church government in a truly Christian Church was that instituted by the apostles—namely, the Presbyterian (Hallam, p. 141). He held that ecclesiastical matters ought ordinarily to be handled by the ministers and officers of the Church, and that as the State has jurisdiction in temporal affairs, so the Church ought to have jurisdiction in spiritual affairs. These views were held by a majority of the Protestants at this time. All reliable historians agree in stating that, of the three great parties in the State,—the Catholic, Anglican, and Puritan,—the Puritan was numerically the strongest.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PERSECUTION OF THE PURITANS.

“They shall put you out of the synagogues ; yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”—JOHN xvi. 2.

THE rise of the Puritan party in England was so rapid that, in the early part of Elizabeth's reign, they were not only the strongest party in the nation, but were able to return a majority to the House of Commons. Their rapid increase was owing chiefly to two causes—the principles which they professed, and the natural desire of the intelligent classes to set themselves free from the intolerance and thralldom of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. By an Act passed in the fifth year of Elizabeth, Roman Catholics were excluded from Parliament. This Act strengthened the Puritan party in the Commons ; for a large majority of the Protestants in the nation were decidedly in favour of the reforms advocated by the Puritans.

In April, 1571, a bill was introduced in the Commons for revising and reforming the Book of Common Prayer. It was a very moderate measure, intended to remove

a few superstitious ceremonies, and to correct some flagrant abuses in respect to benefices. Several benefices were conferred upon the same individual, who received the income without making any adequate provision for the spiritual needs of the parish. This was felt to be a great scandal. It was a relic of popery transferred entire from the Romish Church to the Church of England. The only difference was that the power of dispensing these favours was vested in the sovereign and the archbishop, instead of in the pope. The abuse seemed more flagrant now than in former times; for at the Council of Trent, in 1562, the Church of Rome, stirred up by the reforming zeal of Protestants in all countries, had made several important reforms in such matters. The existence of such abuses, together with the negligence of many of the bishops, and the absence of any rules of discipline for correcting the lives of the clergy, intensified the growing dissatisfaction with the Episcopal Church as by law established. Hence the bill sought to take from the Archbishop of Canterbury the power of granting licenses and conferring benefices. This useful and moderate measure, if passed, would in all probability have satisfied the moderate section of the Puritan party, and have preserved the unity of the Church; but Parliament was not allowed to proceed with it, through the interference of the queen, who was always exceedingly jealous on all matters touching her supremacy.

However, the Puritans were able to show their

strength in another important matter during this same session. The Forty-two Articles, originally drawn up by Cranmer, Ridley, and others in the time of Edward VI., were revised and reduced to their present number, thirty-nine, by the Convocation of 1562; but they had not received the sanction of Parliament. This was now deemed to be necessary in order to make them legally binding on the clergy. The articles relating to doctrine were in substantial harmony with the doctrinal views of Calvin and Knox, and were thoroughly acceptable to the Puritans. A few of the articles, however, declared the supremacy of the Crown, the lawfulness of the established form of consecrating bishops and priests, and the power of the Church to prescribe rites and ceremonies. The Puritan party joined issue with the Anglican party on these points, and they were strong enough to prevent the articles that refer to rites and ceremonies from receiving the sanction of Parliament. Hence the Act of 1571 enjoins subscription only to the articles of religion which concern the confession of the true Christian faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments, comprised in a book entitled "*Articles whereupon it was Agreed*," &c. The word "only" was inserted with the express intention of excluding the articles that refer to government and discipline. This limitation, however, proved of no practical value; for the bishops insisted upon subscription to the whole Thirty-nine Articles, and thus perpetuated the grounds of dissatisfaction. The archbishop also, by his undue severity, helped to make the

breach wider day by day, for he persisted in persecuting the Puritan ministers, forbidding them to preach in the churches, prohibiting the sale of their books, and denying them the privilege of meeting in private assembly. Even common citizens, for the simple offence of listening to Puritan sermons, were arrested and dragged before the High Commission Court and imprisoned. Thus it appears that, with other abuses, the spirit of persecution was bodily transferred from the Romish Church to the Episcopal Church of England.

The Puritans, however, had still a firm hold upon the heart of the nation, and they could still count upon powerful friends in the council. There were also prudent men among the queen's councillors, who, as a mere matter of policy, feared to alienate the powerful Puritan party from the Crown. The Duke of Norfolk's conspiracy in 1569, in proposing to marry the deposed queen of Scots and place her as a Catholic prince upon the throne, revealed the fact that a large portion of the nobility were still more Catholic than Protestant, and might any day be stimulated to rebellion by the fulminations of the pope. While Elizabeth lived, her high personal qualities might be trusted to maintain the attachment of the great majority of her subjects, and thus secure the stability of the throne. But, although she was still young, she had on several occasions been dangerously ill; and in the event of her removal without leaving an heir, prudent statesmen trembled for the succession. Under such a

possible crisis they had nowhere to look but to the zeal and loyal Protestantism of the Presbyterian party. They were one in religion and in aim with the Lords of the Congregation, who had triumphantly established the Protestant religion in Scotland; and could be confidently relied on to withstand, even at the peril of their lives, any retrograde step towards Rome. It was a well-known fact that a great majority of conforming Churchmen had no sympathy with reformed doctrines, and therefore could not be relied on in any such emergency, but would readily support a Catholic claimant for the crown. On the other hand, every zealous opponent of superstitious ceremonies, every abhorrer of Romish doctrines, every denouncer of prelatical power, might be trusted as sound to the heart's core in Protestant principles, and would be found ready at all hazards to preserve a Protestant succession. Thus while the principles of the Reformation were still in a measure trembling in the balance, all true Protestants were anxious to avert disunion among themselves; and many of the councillors strongly opposed the harsh and cruel intolerance of the archbishop and bishops, in compelling ministers who had real conscientious scruples to conform in every minute particular.

About this time the clergy in several parts of the country, for the better instruction of the people in Scripture truth, commenced a religious exercise, which was called "prophesyings." It was a public meeting for the study of Scripture, each person present having

liberty to express his views on the text or subject under consideration. A moderator, appointed by the bishop, presided, and summed up the discussion, and gave his own opinion on the several points raised in the debate. As matters pertaining to the government and discipline of the Church might be introduced, and as nearly all the learning and ability were on the side of the Puritans, the queen conceived a prejudice against these exercises, and instructed the archbishop to suppress them. Several of the bishops and privy councillors wrote to the archbishop, defending the exercises as most useful in instructing the people in religious doctrine, and urging him to permit their continuance so long as the teaching was in accordance with the doctrine of the Church. But, as usual, the queen's sweet will prevailed; and the intolerant Parker, despising the wise counsel of the privy councillors, suppressed the meetings, thus furnishing the Puritan party with another real grievance. The queen also went a step further, and ordered that fewer licenses for preaching should be granted. No parish minister was allowed to preach any discourse, except the regular homilies appointed by Parliament, without first receiving a special license. In 1575, Grindal succeeded Parker as Archbishop of Canterbury, and firmly declined to carry out the queen's will in suppressing these exercises. He was consequently set aside, and the queen by circular letters commanded the bishops everywhere to suppress the prophesyings. This was, perhaps, an arbitrary stretch of the power

—the power conferred upon her by the Act of Supremacy passed in the first year of her reign. Be that as it may, the prophesyings were put down, and were never again renewed.

On the elevation of Whitgift to the see of Canterbury, severer measures still were enacted against private assemblies. All preaching, reading, or catechising in private houses, if any besides the members of the household were present, was strictly prohibited. The archbishop also required all ministers to subscribe to three points, including the articles which Parliament refused to sanction—namely, the queen's supremacy; the Book of Common Prayer and Ordination Service; and the whole of the Thirty-nine Articles. Many of the ministers refused to subscribe, and appealed to the privy council against the action of the archbishop. The Puritan party had powerful friends at court, and Sir Francis Knollys wrote a strong letter of disapproval to the archbishop; but, certain of the queen's support, he declined to relax in the slightest degree the arbitrary measure which he had set on foot; and, as a consequence, several hundred ministers were suspended or deprived of their benefices.

By the Act of Supremacy, all ecclesiastical jurisdiction was vested in the crown, and the queen was empowered to exercise her authority and jurisdiction, by means of commissioners appointed under the Great Seal, in such a manner as she might from time to time direct. Plenary powers were conferred upon them to visit, to correct all abuses, offences, and

heresies, and all irregularities that come under the control of the spiritual authority. In this way the queen could act independently of Parliament in all spiritual affairs. Power was given to three commissioners, one of them being a bishop, to punish any person who absented himself from church, to deprive all ministers who held any doctrine contrary to the Thirty-nine Articles, to examine all suspected persons on their oaths, and to punish, by spiritual censure, by fines, or by imprisonment, all who should refuse to appear before them or to obey their orders.

With such a powerful engine at his disposal, Whitgift proceeded to require all who were suspected of Puritan principles to take the oath, and to submit to a series of questions so minute, and yet so comprehensive, as to admit no loophole to escape. It was a most tyrannical proceeding, equalled only by the Spanish Inquisition. It was also proposed that all who held office in the State should make a declaration that Episcopacy was lawful according to the Word of God. However, this arbitrary proposal was frustrated by the influence of Lord Burleigh in the council. But it showed how keenly Episcopalians felt the weakness of their position, so long as it could not be affirmed that the government of the Church was founded upon the Word of God and the practice of the apostles.

The Puritan ministers who had been deprived of their benefices now set up the Presbyterian government outside of the Established Church, with synods

and presbyteries. This was about the year 1590. The first presbytery, however, was formed in London. as early as the year 1572, the year in which John Knox entered into his rest and his reward. The ministers subscribed to the Presbyterian "Book of Discipline," thereby recognising the right of laymen to a substantive part in the government and discipline of the Church. In a short time presbyteries were set up in several counties, and the strength of the Presbyterian party was such as to incite the archbishop to have recourse to severer measures. Several of the leaders in the movement were summoned before the commissioners, and, refusing to take the oath, they were summarily committed to the Fleet Prison, the heaviest penalty in the power of the commissioners to inflict. Although the Puritans refused to acknowledge the queen's supremacy in spiritual affairs, on the ground that Christ was the only Head of the Church, yet they were thoroughly loyal to the queen's person, and strenuously upheld her sovereignty in temporal affairs. But while acknowledging in its fullest sense the temporal sovereignty of the queen, they claimed for the assemblies of the Church the full power of determining "all matters of doctrine and manners so far as appertaineth to the conscience." They also advocated the abolition of patronage, demanding for the people the right of choosing their own ministers. These were very moderate proposals, and Parliament was prepared to give them a favourable consideration ; but the queen was so jealous of all intermeddling with

her supremacy over the Church, that no concessions could be made.

In the Parliament of 1593, by the influence of the court, an Act was passed which eventually pressed very severely upon a section of the Puritans. It was enacted that any person above sixteen years of age, who should for the space of one month forbear to attend church, should be imprisoned until such time as he should make submission and a declaration of his willingness to conform in the future. If they persisted in their refusal to conform, they were to be banished from the country, and not to return without the queen's permission on the pain of being put to death as felons. This statute pressed severely upon two parties,—the Roman Catholics, and that section of the Puritan party that came to be known as Separatists. They were extreme men who declared it to be unlawful to continue in the Established Church. They were usually called Brownists or Barrowists, from the names of their leaders, but soon took the name of Independents. Their extreme views, which were subversive of all order and government in the Church, found no sympathy among the Presbyterian party. The Presbyterians acknowledged the lawfulness of remaining in the Church, while they agitated for further reforms. They did not object to the title and office of bishop, provided bishops were made subject to the synods instead of to the queen.

The extreme views of the Brownists, or Independents, marked them out as special subjects for perse-

cution. The bishops enforced the statute against them with such unmitigated severity that multitudes were driven from the country and took refuge in Holland. Barrow and Greenwood were not allowed to leave the country, but were put to death on a charge of issuing seditious writings. Some historians are anxious to maintain that no persons were put to death by Elizabeth for their religious opinions, but for disloyalty and treason. But these men died with such fervent expressions of piety, and such sentiments of loyalty to the queen, that she bitterly regretted that she had consented to their death. Others also suffered severely at her hands, whose loyalty was above suspicion. When Stubbe, a Puritan lawyer, for writing a pamphlet against the queen's contemplated marriage with the young Duke of Anjou, was sentenced to have his right hand cut off, no sooner was the penalty inflicted than he waved his hat with the other hand and shouted, "Long live Queen Elizabeth!" The truth is that Elizabeth would permit no one to oppose her own imperious will in any matter whatsoever, whether civil or religious. She inherited the arbitrary and intolerant will of the Tudors, and it invariably found a way of asserting itself.

England owes much to the reign of Queen Elizabeth. By her personal virtues and strength of character, during a long reign of forty-five years, she firmly established the Protestant religion, and thus started England on the pathway of true greatness. Harassed by popish plots and conspiracies on every hand, she

rose superior to all, and gave a convincing proof to popes and Catholic princes that England, having started on the path of reform, and having trampled under foot the authority of an alien power, would never again submit to the thralldom and domination of Rome. For this great service Elizabeth deserves the sincere gratitude of every true Protestant and every real well-wisher of his country. For if England during this period had been governed by a weak or pliant prince, in all probability the fetters of Romish superstition would have been riveted upon her to this day. It is a remarkable fact that all those nations that declined to shake themselves free from the iron rule of Rome, during the sixteenth century, have never been able to do so until the present day. The better fate of England, therefore, is mainly due to the ability, and energy, and firmness of "Good Queen Bess."

In her treatment of the Puritans, however, her administration was a signal failure. Thoroughly loyal to the throne and Protestant to the heart's core, they deserved more generous treatment at her hands. They made no preposterous demands. They claimed only such reforms as had been everywhere admitted in the Reformed Churches in Scotland and on the Continent. The ceremonies to which they objected were all relics of popery, and had no sanction from Scripture. They had no selfish ends to serve. If they opposed the supremacy of the queen in spiritual matters, it was that Christ might receive His true place as the only King and Head of the Church. If they opposed rites

and ceremonies of mere human origin, it was only to assert the freedom of the Church and the right of private judgment. They were true reformers, and not revolutionists. They had, moreover, a majority of the nation on their side, and a majority in several successive Parliaments. Their contention was just and reasonable, and their agitation was thoroughly constitutional. And for the sovereign to assert her own arbitrary will against their moderate demands, made through the proper channel and in a constitutional manner, was certainly contrary to the spirit of the British Constitution.

The one dark blot on the great queen's reign, and the one serious defect in her character, was her arbitrary and intolerant spirit. It was not that she had any personal ill-will to the noble, godly Puritans, that she oppressed them and resisted their demands. The arbitrary spirit of the Tudor often descended in merciless spleen even upon her own bishops. When Cox, Bishop of Ely, resisted the granting of the Church estates in his diocese to the Queen's favourites, he received the following characteristic note:—"Proud prelate, you know what you were before I made you what you are. If you do not immediately comply with my request, by G—— I will unfrock you.—ELIZABETH."

Fletcher, Bishop of London, was suspended by her sole authority, simply for marrying "a fine lady and a widow." She always had a strong prejudice against married clergymen. On one occasion, when Aylmer

preached too severely in her presence against vanity in dress, so that her conscience reproved her, she told her ladies that if the bishop would again discourse on such matters, she would "fit him for heaven; but he would have to walk thither without a staff, and leave his mantle behind him." It is necessary to note such incidents as these, to show that the queen's severity towards the Puritans was the outcome of her own imperious will, and was not necessitated by any insolence or expressions of disloyalty on their part.

The state of the Church of England in the beginning of the seventeenth century was not such as to commend the policy of Elizabeth. Although the Puritan ministers had been molested and persecuted for more than forty years, still they had rapidly increased in numbers, and influence, and popularity. Persecution, instead of bringing them back to the bosom of the Established Church, only drove them beyond its pale and made reconciliation impossible. And whatever might be said in favour of retaining some of the ancient ceremonies in the hope of winning the Roman Catholics, during the first years of her reign, this plea could have no force at a later period; for, before the close of her reign, Protestantism was so firmly established that there was no necessity for alienating others in order to conciliate them. To have granted all the demands of the Extremists, or Independents, would, indeed, have been impossible; but, had the moderate demands of the Presbyterian party for the removal of frivolous ceremonies and superstitious rites, for the

reform of the spiritual courts, and for abolishing pluralities of benefices, been complied with, the unity of the Church might have been preserved; and the Church of England might in all sincerity have adopted from that time the Roman Catholic formula, and designated herself, "the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church."

CHAPTER XIX.

PROGRESS OF PRESBYTERIAN PRINCIPLES UNDER JAMES I.

“Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”—2 TIM. i. 12.

IN the year 1603, Queen Elizabeth died, and was succeeded by James VI. of Scotland, the son of her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots. For nearly three centuries Scotland had maintained her independence, which she had triumphantly asserted on the field of Bannockburn under the leadership of her great king, Robert the Bruce. Ireland had been subdued and joined to England in a manner calculated to wound her national pride. But it was otherwise with Scotland. She gave to England a king, for her sovereign was the legal heir of both kingdoms, and thus a peaceable union was effected. Ireland was governed as a dependency won by the sword; but Scotland retained intact her own laws and her own independent Parliament. But, in matters of religion, Ireland was still in bondage to Rome. The hand of Rome lay much more heavily upon her than the hand of England. Although the great body of the Irish people persist in

shutting their eyes to the fact, it is nevertheless true, that the prosperity of the country has been retarded not by servitude to England, but by servitude to Rome. From the day that the last O'Donnel and O'Neill, who held the position of independent princes in Ireland, kissed the hand of James the First of England, the Irish people have not ceased to deplore the loss of political independence. It seems remarkably strange that a people characterised by such an intense love of liberty, should not have joined with the other northern nations, during the sixteenth century, and have shaken off the shackles of Rome.

Scotland was intensely and enthusiastically Protestant, and that fact accounts for the rapid strides she made on the path to prosperity and power. Ireland remained in ignorant and superstitious bigotry, intensely attached to the Romish faith, and thus her path to freedom and prosperity was hopelessly barred. The people were taught by their spiritual advisers to abhor England and English rule, because England had rejected the authority of the pope. They were taught to regard themselves as a conquered nation, ready at any time to strike for liberty, and not as a constituent part of the empire.

The English Church and nation were no doubt very much to blame for the state of things which followed, on account of their neglect in making any adequate provision for the spiritual wants of the people at the time of the conquest. They deemed it sufficient to establish a hierarchy of Protestant archbishops, bishops,

and rectors, who did nothing but squander among themselves the spoils of a Church to which the vast majority of the people had been devotedly attached. Overlooking the grand truth that a true Protestant Church can be built up only by the power of the Word of God and the Spirit of God, they neglected to furnish the Irish people with a translation of the Bible in their own language, or to supply them with religious teachers who could be understood by the people.

In Scotland matters were entirely different. Scotland was not only Protestant, but Presbyterian. Her reformers, taking their stand upon the Word of God, had discarded a useless and expensive hierarchy. They would not tolerate any half-way measures, or rest content with a compromise, like the English reformers. They had little more sympathy for prelacy than they had for popery, and made but little difference between the English liturgy and the Romish liturgy. Unfortunately, by their faithful assertion of the freedom and rights of the Church, they had convinced the despotic James that Presbyterian discipline was not favourable to the sole supremacy of the king. He came to see that if he was to be sole dictator in temporal affairs, it would help him very materially to have the people taught to obey the archbishop, as sole dictator in ecclesiastical matters. This is the explanation of his favourite epigram: "No bishop, no king." And it was this consideration that determined his mind in favour of Episcopacy. Thus James the First came to the throne of England with a strong

aversion to the Presbyterian religion in which he was brought up, and with a strong leaning towards the government set up in the Church of England. And no sooner was he established on the throne, than he began to manifest an intense dislike to the ways of the Puritans, and an intolerant zeal for the ritual and government of the Anglican Church. The hopes, therefore, awakened in the minds of the Presbyterian party in England, that a king brought up in their religion, himself claiming to be a theologian, would not at least be hostile to their views, were soon dispelled. They would cease to expect any favour from one who had discarded his religion in order that he might the more easily become a despotic ruler. Here we have conclusive proof that the Presbyterian government is favourable to the liberties of the people.

It was during the reign of James the First that those extravagant theories arose, which, to quote Macaulay, "became the badge of the most violent class of Tories and High Churchmen." It was maintained that the Supreme Ruler regarded with peculiar favour hereditary monarchy invested with absolute power. It was affirmed that the law of primogeniture was a Divine institution, and that the legislature had no power to deprive the legitimate prince of his rights. It was also asserted that the laws, which in England had limited the power of the sovereign, were to be regarded merely as concessions which the sovereign had made to Parliament, and which he might at any time by his own inherent authority recall, and that

any pledge or promise given by the sovereign to the people ought to be regarded merely as an expression of his present intentions, which he might alter or modify at pleasure. It is certain that such absurd and extravagant theories find no support in Scripture. The children of Israel were severely blamed by God for desiring a king, and were afterwards directed to give their allegiance to another. And instead of the succession being restricted to the eldest son, according to the law of primogeniture, younger brothers were more frequently deemed worthy of the honour. Among the patriarchs, Isaac was not the eldest son of Abraham, and Jacob was not the elder son of Isaac; nor was Judah, the head of the royal line, the eldest son of Jacob. Of the kings David was a younger brother, and so was Solomon. The son of the first king of Israel was set aside to make room for David, who was of another family and another tribe. It is evident, therefore, whatever man may do, that God places no premium on the accident of birth. This arrogant claim, however, was well suited to the temper of James. Although the royal line of Scotland through Margaret, daughter of Henry VII., had been excluded by the will of Henry VIII., yet James was the undoubted heir, according to the recognised law of descent, of William the Conqueror. He had therefore a strong personal interest in promoting the idea that birth confers an inalienable right that is superior to any legal enactment. And many of the clergy of the Established Church, who aspired to royal favour,

soon became zealous advocates of these new theories, the disastrous consequences of which were more fully seen during the reign of Charles the First.

And while the hierarchy supported the arrogant claims of the king, as possessing absolute power by Divine right, they were careful also to advance their own claims. The early English reformers had retained the Episcopal form of government as an ancient and convenient ecclesiastical polity; but never claimed it as of Divine right and apostolic practice. They freely admitted that the Presbyterian form of government, set up in the Reformed Churches of Scotland and the Continent, was in accordance with the Word of God. In the year 1603, the convocation of the province of Canterbury recognised the Presbyterian Church of Scotland to be a branch of the Holy Catholic Church of Christ; and the right of Presbyterian ministers to a seat in ecumenical councils was conceded. Many English benefices were held by Presbyterian ministers who had been ordained, not by a bishop, but according to the Scriptural rule, "by the laying-on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14); and it was considered to be not only unnecessary, but unlawful to ordain them again by a bishop. The validity of presbyterial ordination was not questioned.

But a new race of theologians had arisen, who, to further their own arrogant pretensions, began to claim for Episcopacy Divine appointment, and for the Anglican clergy apostolic orders.

The reformers in the time of Edward VI. and Elizabeth defended the ritual of the Church of England on the low ground that it might be used without sin; and, therefore, that when it was enjoined by the civil power, dutiful subjects ought to obey. Now, however, those who claimed that Episcopal government was of Divine institution, began to attach especial importance to rites and ceremonies. Instead of drawing nearer to the Puritans by advocating a simpler and more Scriptural form of worship, it was urged that the early reformers, in their zeal against Rome, had abolished many ancient rites which might well have been retained.

In doctrine also there was a similar tendency to go back towards Rome. All the leading reformers of the sixteenth century in England, as well as in Scotland and on the Continent, held what is usually called the Calvinistic system of doctrine respecting original sin, human depravity, predestination, election, faith, the gift of the Spirit, &c. The Thirty-nine Articles, as well as the Lambeth articles drawn up during the reign of Elizabeth, are thoroughly Calvinistic. During the controversy between Calvin and Arminius, the English government and the leading theologians of the Church of England sided with Calvin, and would suffer no one to teach Arminian doctrine. But in the beginning of the seventeenth century, those who advocated a departure from the Presbyterian government also manifested a strong dislike to Calvinistic doctrine.

Had the king adhered to the Presbyterian religion, these time-servers would no doubt have courted his favour by advocating the changes demanded by the more moderate section of the Puritan party. He had a splendid opportunity, on his accession, of healing the breaches and restoring the unity of the Church of England. The Puritans were by far the strongest party in the nation, and their piety and loyalty to their new king were unquestioned. The fact that he was brought up in the Presbyterian religion filled them with high hopes that he would be favourable to the reform of the abuses that existed in the Church. On his way to London to assume the reins of government, the Presbyterian clergy presented a petition to him, signed by 825 of their number, pleading for a reform of the government and ritual of the Church. They objected to the use of the surplice, the sign of the cross in baptism, bending the knee at the name of Jesus, baptism by women, the form of absolution, confirmation, reading the Apocrypha, and also to non-resident and incapable ministers, and to benefices held by bishops *in commendam*. The learned Selden says of this latter abuse: "At first when there was a living void and no clerk to fill it, the bishops were to keep it until they found a fit man; but now it is a trick of the bishop to keep it for himself." The custom was abolished in 1836.

Such were the moderate demands of the Presbyterian Party. They made no claim that was adverse to the established hierarchy. Nothing was urged in

this petition against the bishops and archbishops. They were studiously moderate in their demands, in the hope of preserving the unity of the Church. They acted as prudent mediators between the two extreme parties in the nation—namely, the High Churchmen and the Independents; and, had their wise counsels been adopted, the bitter feud which culminated in the Civil War might have been averted. James, however, was in no humour to treat with the petitioners. The bishops had approached him in a most obsequious manner, and gave abundant tokens of their readiness to enhance the royal prerogative. Their fawning attitude convinced the king that with such men at the head of ecclesiastical affairs he could easily become supreme ruler in the Church, a position which he earnestly desired as a step to becoming sole dictator in the State. The king summoned a conference at Hampton Court of eighteen Churchmen and four Nonconformists, to discuss the matters in dispute. But the ungentlemanly and partial behaviour of the king, and the insolence of the bishops towards their opponents, clearly showed that James had already resolved to make common cause with the bishops, and that no concessions might be expected. A few unimportant alterations were made in the Church service after this conference, but the real grievances were left untouched. Shortly afterwards the king issued a proclamation, requiring all civil and ecclesiastical officers to do their duty by rigidly enforcing conformity, at the same time assuring all dissatisfied persons that

they need not expect any further alteration in the service. Nor was this all; for the king, as if determined to show the despotic spirit in which he intended to rule, committed ten of the petitioners to prison—a gross outrage on the civil rights of citizens and freedom of petition. By such ominous proceedings was the rule of the house of Stuart inaugurated.

Bancroft, who now succeeded Whitgift as Archbishop of Canterbury, was not slow in carrying out the injunction of the king to proceed against all the clergy who did not strictly conform to the prescribed order in the services of the Church. Before twelve months had elapsed, and before the first Parliament had assembled, the despotism of the king and the insolence of the bishops had alienated the Puritan party beyond all hope of recovery. In 1604, the Convocation of Canterbury, with the king's assent, established a new code of canons, imposing oaths and exacting securities which aimed at the exclusion of Nonconformists. The House of Commons remonstrated against such tyrannical measures, but to no purpose. Bancroft, no longer restrained from arbitrary persecution by a council favourable to the Puritans, enforced the laws against Nonconformists with the utmost rigour, and many Puritan clergymen were deprived of their benefices.

The early English reformers, having abolished most of the Church festivals, made little or no change in the manner of observing Sundays and holy-days. Now,

however, the Puritan party—a large portion of which still remained within the Established Church—while paying but little attention to festivals of human appointment, laboured to secure a stricter observance of the Lord's Day. James and his bishops saw in this an opportunity of discovering and testing any of the clergy who favoured the principles of the Puritans. Hence he published his "Book of Sports," permitting all lawful recreations on Sunday after Divine service, such as dancing, archery, May-games, and other amusements. No one who had not attended service in the Established Church was allowed to take part in these sports. This act was a studied insult to the Puritans. They held the Lord's Day sacred, and would on no account violate its sanctity by taking part in amusements, or by engaging in any kind of work, except acts of necessity or mercy. To them, and to the Scottish Presbyterians, Christendom owes whatever remains of the sacred day of rest,—a priceless boon to the toiler, as well as a day for spiritual instruction and Christian fellowship.

The "Book of Sports" not only gave permission for engaging in games and amusements on the Lord's Day, but was also made the instrument of most unrighteous persecution. The clergy were enjoined to read from their pulpits this recommendation of Sabbath desecration. This was a most sacrilegious and tyrannical proceeding. The godly Puritans refused to comply with the order, and were either suspended or deprived of their benefices. There is no record of the

total number of Puritan clergy who were deprived, but in the diocese of Norwich alone no less than thirty were excommunicated for the single offence of refusing to desecrate their office by announcing from the pulpit such a scandalous recommendation. Thus the hierarchy of the Established Church of England, as if driven onward by inexorable fate, seemed bent on driving every godly minister beyond its pale.

The licentious court of James the First had no sympathy with the earnest, faithful preaching of these holy, devoted men; hence they received the same treatment as fell to the lot of the Son of God—they cast them out. Such rigorous treatment naturally drove the Puritans to the extreme of denouncing all sorts of games and sports. The very fact that these sports were made the instrument of desecrating God's holy day, filled them with an utter aversion to them. On this account many have denounced the Puritans as fanatical, and gloomy, and austere. However, if there ever was a time in the history of the Church when the command of God, "Come ye out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean," had peculiar significance, it was in this age, when the most sacred ordinances of religion were being perverted so as to minister to the lusts of the flesh.

Persecution, however, did not succeed in stamping out a pure religion. The pathway of persecution proved to be the pathway to power. The word of God grew mightily and prevailed. The Presbyterian

party, zealous for purity of worship and the honour of Christ, so impressed the nation with the soundness of their principles that in the next reign Episcopacy was set aside, and the Presbyterian government, by act of Parliament, was set up as the religion of the three kingdoms.

CHAPTER XX.

PROGRESS OF PRESBYTERIANISM UNDER CHARLES I.

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”—
1 TIM. v. 17.

IN the year 1625, James I. died, and was succeeded by his son, Charles I. Like his father, Charles was strongly attached to Episcopacy, believing that Presbytery, which placed so much power in the hands of the people, could not be favourable to his notions of monarchy. The Presbyterian government is the very model of a limited constitutional monarchy; but Charles was ambitious enough to aspire to absolute monarchy. For political reasons, therefore, rather than from conviction, Charles became a zealous Episcopalian; and thus was out of harmony with the religious convictions of the majority of the nation. An Arminian in doctrine, an Episcopalian in Church polity, and married to a papist, he had more affection for the Roman Catholics than he had for the Puritans. Although despotic to the last degree, and faithless on principle, deliberately violating the most solemn pledges, as if it were the right thing to do, still

Charles possessed some good qualities rather rare among princes of that period. His domestic life was above suspicion, and his court was a model of virtue. He seemed, however, to have been impelled by inexorable fate to crooked and perfidious ways. His bishops and theologians had taught him that, in every pledge which he gave to his subjects, there was an implied reservation that all such promises might be broken when occasion demanded. This pernicious theory, which he often found very convenient in practice, proved his ruin. He soon lost the confidence, and with it the respect and affection of the Parliament and the nation, and these being lost, all was lost. Unable to command the support of the House of Commons, he dissolved Parliament, determined to rule in defiance of law. However, he was soon brought to bay, and was induced, in order to obtain supplies, to sign that second great charter of English liberties, known as the Petition of Right. By subscribing that famous document he pledged himself never again to levy taxes without the consent of Parliament, never to commit any person to prison without a fair trial in due course of law, and never again to substitute martial law for the ancient jurisprudence of the realm. But in less than a month, just as soon as the taxes were collected, Charles violated his most solemn pledges, dissolved Parliament, and cast several of the most prominent members into prison. Determined to make himself a despot, he ruled from 1629 to 1640, a period of eleven years, without summoning Parliament

—an act unparalleled in the annals of English history. Such in brief was the character of the monarch with whom the Puritans had to deal.

The administration of ecclesiastical affairs was under the direction of Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. He had forsaken the principles of the Reformation both in doctrine and in ceremonies; and, although at the head of the Protestant Church of England, he was much more a Catholic than a Protestant. With all a papist's bigotry, he persecuted the Puritans with remorseless energy. They were searched out in every corner of the kingdom. Wherever a congregation of Nonconformists existed, it was hunted up and dispersed by the agents of Laud. With such persistent zeal was the persecution carried on, that even the devotions of private families were ruthlessly invaded. With the powers of the High Commission Court at his disposal, and free from the control of Parliament, Laud, by fine, imprisonment, mutilation, and the pillory, displayed a rapacity and savage cruelty unknown in former persecutions. Multitudes of godly men, despairing of religious liberty at home, sought an asylum in America, and planted a colony in New England, preferring to enjoy their religion in the wilds of the wilderness to submitting to popish practices at home. In those perilous times it required some stamina to be a Christian. A single instance will suffice to show the barbarous cruelty practised upon those who dared to defend their religion and their rights against the dark designs of the king and

the archbishop. Charles had endeavoured to force Episcopacy upon Scotland against the will of the whole nation. In defence of the Presbyterian government which had been set up in the Church of Scotland in the time of Knox, Dr. Alexander Leighton, professor of divinity at St. Andrews, published a book entitled "Zion's Plea against Prelacy." For this he was condemned to the pillory by the infamous Star Chamber. We are told that Laud, on hearing the sentence pronounced, "pulled off his cap and gave God thanks." The bare recital of this barbarous butchery, some years afterwards, when Laud himself was arraigned for trial, sent such a thrill of horror through the members of Parliament, that the clerk was several times ordered to pause until the members recovered themselves. The clerk was reading from the petition of Dr. Leighton. This horrid sentence was to be inflicted with knife, fire, and whip at the pillory. "Your petitioner's hands being tied to a stake, besides all other torments, he received thirty-six stripes with a treble cord; after which he stood for two hours in the pillory, in cold, frost, and snow, naked and bleeding; and then suffered the rest, such as cutting off the ear, firing the face, and slitting up the nose. He was made a spectacle of misery to men and to angels." And on the same day of the following week, "the sores upon his back, ears, and face not being healed, he was again whipped at the pillory in Cheapside, and there had the remainder of the sentence executed, by cutting off the other ear, slitting

up the other nostril, and branding the other cheek." Similar punishments were inflicted upon other eminent Puritans. These brutal deeds, however, soon recoiled upon the perpetrators, and only hastened their downfall and deserved degradation; for the generous spirit of the English nation revolted from such horrid barbarities. Persecution could not stamp out Puritanism.

Barbarous and inhuman as these proceedings were, they were as nothing compared with the terrible tragedy enacted in Ireland in 1641—the massacre of the Protestants of Ulster by the Roman Catholics. This wholesale slaughter of innocent and unsuspecting Protestants, in which probably not less than two hundred thousand men, women, and children perished, commenced on the 23rd of October, and lasted several months. The cruelties practised were such as could hardly be believed of the most barbarous hordes in pagan countries. No mercy was shown to helpless infancy or to defenceless women. Multitudes were shut up in houses and burned to death. Children were taken by the heels, and their brains dashed out against the trees. Many were hung up by the arms, and slashed to death to see how many blows an Englishman could endure. The ignorant people were taught by the priests that they would merit heaven by putting the heretics to death; and the murderers received the sacrament before commencing the fearful work of carnage. So great was the slaughter that the northern part of Ireland was almost depopulated. The one sickening thought in connection with this savage

and murderous transaction is, that the perpetrators of these awful deeds were able to produce a commission, signed by the king's seal, sanctioning this terrible sacrifice of human life. Liberty to exterminate the Protestants of Ulster was the demand made by the Irish Catholics as the price of their services in supporting the king against his Parliament; and Charles did not consider the price too great, if thereby he might attain to arbitrary power. At the time of the massacre, Charles was in Edinburgh endeavouring to conciliate the Scots, and to obtain their aid against the English Parliament. In the hope of securing their favour, he passed an Act declaring that the government of the Church by bishops and archbishops was contrary to the Word of God. But the wary Scots knew Charles too well to be duped by any fair promises extracted from him in the hour of extremity. His habitual disregard for his promises, and his avowed preference for prelacy, were too well known for such a bait to take. The Scots were shrewd enough to see that their only hope, both as patriots and as Presbyterians, was to be found in the triumph of the English Parliament in its struggle for liberty against a faithless and tyrannical king.

At this time the great body of the English Puritans, including very many of the Established clergy, were decidedly Presbyterian in their convictions, and were anxious to set up a Church polity similar to that of the Church of Scotland. Never in the history of the nation did the subject of Church government receive

so much earnest attention. It became the burning question of the day. The insolence and tyranny of the bishops compelled attention to be directed to their office and their pretensions. In the Convocation of Canterbury, in 1640, they passed a series of canons, among other things imposing an oath upon all the clergy, binding them to seek no alteration in the government of the Church by bishops, deans, and archdeacons. This oath was also to be taken by all laymen holding any ecclesiastical office. The House of Commons came to the help of the clergy, and rescinded the canons, and also deprived the hierarchy, assembled in Convocation, of the right of passing laws binding the clergy without the consent of Parliament. A committee was appointed, consisting of ten earls, ten bishops, and ten barons, to report upon the innovations in the direction of popery recently introduced into the services of the Church. There was a crying demand for immediate reform.

The Presbyterian party in England, now so strong as to control the counsels of Parliament, were anxious to avoid extreme measures, and did not object to the office and title of bishop, provided the bishop always acted on the advice and with the concurrence of the college of presbyters. They did not object to Archbishop Usher's scheme, that the bishop should be permanent president or moderator of presbytery, there being a presbytery in each county, consisting of at least twelve members. This scheme passed in committee of the House of Commons in 1641. No less

than seven hundred beneficed clergymen petitioned for this change. It did not pass into law, however, as it did not go far enough to satisfy the commissioners from Scotland. The sympathies of the Scotch Presbyterians were entirely with the English Parliament, but they wished some sure guarantee for the security of their own religion; for Charles was as anxious as his father to establish Episcopacy in Scotland. And so long as Episcopacy was the dominant religion in the realm, they could not feel that Presbytery was secure. Therefore, before they would agree to render material aid to the English Parliament, they insisted that the proposed reform in Church polity should be thorough, that Episcopacy should be abolished, and that the Presbyterian government should be set up in its place. A bill was at once introduced to abolish Episcopacy, which passed the second reading by a vote of 139 to 108. The High Commission Court, which had been so scandalously abused by the bishops, was also abolished; and the bishops were deprived of their seats in the House of Lords in the following session, February 1642. This was the last concession made by Charles before he resolved to stake his fortunes on the issues of a civil war between himself and his Parliament.

At this time another cloud arose on the ecclesiastical horizon. The most exciting topics and the most difficult problems of this period were ecclesiastical. The tyranny of the bishops and the ecclesiastical courts had driven a section of the Parliamentary party to the

extreme of opposing all Church courts. Synods and presbyteries were placed in the same category as Convocation and the Court of Arches. They were unwilling to commit themselves to Presbytery any more than to Prelacy or Popery. They were extreme Independents, and held that every Christian congregation ought to be independent of all control outside itself, whether civil or ecclesiastical. These extreme and unscriptural views have in recent years been greatly modified by the Independents in the direction of Presbytery. But during the Civil War their tenets made rapid and even alarming progress in the army. Several of the able and prudent leaders of the Parliamentary party had been removed by death. Pym, for his distinguished services, had been honoured with a grave among the Plantagenets. The brave and patriotic Hampden fell with his face to the foe on the field of battle. Northumberland and Essex lacked energy and ability, and proved a failure in the field. These circumstances opened a way for Oliver Cromwell to come to the front. His first work was to remodel the army, by dispensing with mercenary soldiers of low or doubtful character, and filling the ranks with grave, solid, religious men. From this moment a new era dawned upon the fortunes of the Parliament. Victory followed upon victory. Everywhere Cromwell's praying army was invincible. Charles was hopelessly defeated, and was compelled to take refuge in Scotland. Cromwell was an Independent; and by his great popularity was able to stamp his religious

views upon the men who had fought and conquered under him. Thus we can account for the fact that while the Presbyterians were predominant in the House of Commons, the Independents became dominant in the army.

During the progress of these events both Houses of Parliament united in interdicting the use of the Liturgy, and substituting in its place the Presbyterian Directory of Public Worship. They also required all men to sign the Solemn League and Covenant, a famous document founded upon the Scotch National Covenant, signed by nineteen-twentieths of the Scottish nation in 1638. This covenant was signed at Westminster, on 25th September 1643, by both Houses of Parliament, the Scottish commissioners, and the Assembly of Divines, only one peer refusing to adhibit his name. By the Solemn League and Covenant, the subscribers bound themselves by an oath to preserve the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government; to seek the reformation of religion in England and Ireland, according to the Word of God and the practice of the best Reformed Churches; and to endeavour to bring the Churches of the three kingdoms to the nearest possible conjunction and uniformity of religion, confession of faith, form of Church government, directory for worship, and catechising; to endeavour, without respect of persons, to extirpate popery and prelacy (that is, church government by archbishops, bishops, deans, &c.), and whatever should be found contrary to

sound doctrine and the power of godliness; and, further, to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and the liberties of the kingdoms, and the king's person and authority in the preservation and defence of the true religion and the liberties of the kingdoms; and, finally, they pledged themselves to personal reformation and a holy life. The great body of the people of all ranks entered into this solemn covenant with great enthusiasm, and it marks an important era in the history of English Christianity. About one-fifth of the clergy, having popish or prelatical leanings, refused to subscribe, and were sequestered from their livings.

During the session of 1642, Parliament, while discussing the government of the Church, deemed it expedient to convene an assembly of the most learned divines in the kingdom, to consist of laymen as well as clergymen, according to the usage of Presbyterian Churches, to draw up a scheme of doctrine and government for a general reformation of the Church. This famous assembly consisted of 120 divines, together with 30 lay assessors, 10 of these being lords and 20 commoners. The divines were principally clergymen of the English Church, selected by Parliament on account of their learning and piety. At the request of Parliament, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland sent up four ministers and three elders. The ministers were Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie, Samuel Rutherford, and Robert Baillie. The assembly met on 1st July, 1643, under the presidency of the

learned Dr Twisse. The Scotch commissioners did not arrive until November. The assembly continued to sit, with but little intermission, for nearly five years. Of the English clergy, the great majority were in favour of Presbyterian government, although there were a few Episcopalians and a small minority of Independents. The result of their patient and learned labour is still preserved to us in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms — everywhere throughout the world accepted as the standards of Presbyterian Churches. Of this large and learned assembly there were only one or two in favour of subjecting the Church to the authority of the civil power, and but five Independents, who were in favour of rejecting all authority and control. Three weeks were spent in debating the mode of administering the Lord's Supper with these five Independents. They would have the ordinance celebrated without any preparatory services — no reading of the Word or preaching at the time of celebration, and no thanksgiving after. Many days were devoted to the subject of ruling elders. But the all-engrossing topic was the Divine right of Presbyterian government. The question set down for discussion was, Whether several congregations may, and by Divine appointment ought, to be placed under the care and control of a presbytery composed of ministers and lay elders? After thirty days' debate, the Divine right of Presbytery was carried by an overwhelming majority, the five Independents being the

only dissentients. Thus we see that this large assembly of eminent divines, after most exhaustive study and debate, and after having tried Episcopacy for nearly a century, were all but unanimous in declaring that the principles and practice of the Presbyterian Church were thoroughly in harmony with the teaching of Scripture and the practice of the apostles. The labours of this assembly were followed up by Parliament, and the triumph of Presbyterian principles became complete in point of law, by an ordinance of February 1646, establishing Presbyterian government by presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies throughout England. The House of Commons, however, jealous of its own authority, enacted that from all the church courts an appeal should lie in the last instance to Parliament. With this reservation, a pure Presbyterian Church was set up in England, with presbyteries and synods instead of bishops and archbishops, and the Presbyterian Directory instead of the Liturgy and the Book of Common Prayer.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STATE OF RELIGION UNDER CROMWELL AND CHARLES II.

“ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”—Eph. iv. 3.



FEW months after the passing of the Act setting up the Presbyterian government in the Church of England, an ordinance was passed in January, 1647, for the speedy dividing and settling the several counties of the kingdom into distinct presbyteries and congregational elderships, or sessions. This important work had not been completed when a new difficulty arose, which, in a great measure, frustrated the laudable efforts of Parliament to place the ecclesiastical affairs of the kingdom on a sound and permanent basis.

Cromwell and his Ironsides were everywhere victorious in the field. In England, Scotland, Ireland, and on the Continent, no foe could stand before them. Probably never in the annals of warfare did an army go forth to battle in such perfect discipline, and so entirely pervaded by the fear of God. Friends and foes alike bear testimony to the fact that no drunken-

ness or gambling was seen in the camp; no oath was uttered by officer or private soldier; no outrage of any description was perpetrated; the property of citizens and the honour and safety of women and children were held sacred. Nothing but the discovery of ritualistic or popish practices could excite them to any act that could be construed as violent or irregular. And any acts of this description were done, not from passion, but from principle. Everything savouring of popery was regarded as part of the common enemy against which they were contending. Everywhere—in Wales, in Scotland, in Ireland, as well as in England—the partisans of Charles were crushed. His faithlessness and duplicity were such as to make it impossible to come to terms with him, with any assurance that the privileges of Parliament or the liberty of the subject would be maintained inviolate. A large party in the army, therefore, began to clamour for his head. Cromwell was opposed to this extreme step, both from principle and from policy. He was shrewd enough to see that Charles the First, untrusted, hated, despised, and crushed, would be a much less formidable foe than Charles the Second, young and untried, with no past record to excite suspicion and to breed disgust. However, the majority of the army held Charles responsible for all the blood that had been shed in the three kingdoms, and that, according to human and Divine law, he ought to die, both as a just recompense for his crimes, and as a warning to faithless tyrants. Cromwell, like all leaders of strong men, that he might

ordinarily lead, was sometimes compelled to follow. He was, therefore, compelled to subordinate his own feelings and judgment to the will and determination of the army. It is due to him to record that he publicly insisted that he did not desire or plan the execution of the king; that he could not counsel Parliament to authorize the deed; but that he submitted to the force of circumstances, which seemed to him to indicate more or less clearly the will of Providence.

Charles had become a consummate dissembler. He persistently refused to be bound by honour, or by pledges, or by Parliament. He publicly recognised the Parliament as a legal assembly, and in the council entered a private minute declaring the recognition null. He publicly declared that he would seek no foreign aid against the Parliament, and privately negotiated with France and Denmark for assistance. He publicly took the sacrament in the Church of England as a pledge to the Protestants that he would not tolerate popery, and privately assured the papists that it would be tolerated, and even promised to establish popery in Ireland. There was no possibility, therefore, of restoring such an arch-deceiver to the throne; but his life ought to have been spared. All who subscribed the Solemn League and Covenant were pledged to protect the person of the king, as well as to defend the Protestant religion.

This was the position taken by the Presbyterian party in the House of Commons. They refused to

violate their solemn oath, by yielding to the clamour of the army for the life of the king. They defeated the Independents on 30th November, 1648, by a majority of 125 to 58, and refused the demand. By a vote of 129 to 83, the Presbyterians affirmed that the answers of the king to the proposals of both Houses were a basis for the House to commence negotiations for the settlement of the peace of the kingdom. The army, however, would take no denial. They had taken up the sword against the tyranny of a despotic king, and now they themselves become tyrants in their turn. On 6th December, 1648, a body of troops marched into the House of Commons, and by military force expelled all the Presbyterian members. The minority of Independents, commonly called the Rump, in defiance of law and justice, constituted themselves into a court of justice, and condemned the king to be publicly executed. The Lords unanimously rejected the proposal that the king should be arraigned for trial, and they were all expelled from the House. The Rump pronounced Charles a tyrant, a traitor, a murderer, and an enemy to the country, and he was publicly beheaded in front of his own palace at Whitehall, on the 30th of January, 1649.

The Presbyterian ministers supported the Presbyterian members of the Commons, or constitutional party, as they were called, and resolutely opposed the high-handed and unconstitutional rule of the Independents, or republican party. Cromwell subdued Ireland by his iron rule, depopulating whole towns

and districts, and supplying their place by colonists of Saxon blood. The terror of his invincible army kept the whole country in a state of feverish anxiety and terrible suspense. The despotism of the army soon became a greater grievance than the despotism of the king. All the Royalists, a great majority of the parliamentary party, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, who had during the lifetime of Charles been bitterly opposed to each other, now united to prevent the power of the army from overturning the ancient institutions. But nothing could withstand the mighty onset of Cromwell and his Ironsides. Scotland, too, opposed her power to the dash and determination of this all-powerful army, but all to no purpose. Charles the Second had thrown himself upon the Scots for protection and assistance. He agreed to profess himself a Presbyterian, and subscribed the Covenant. He was permitted to assume the crown in Edinburgh and hold a court. But in two decisive battles the Scottish supporters of the young king were compelled to yield to the military skill and prowess of the great general, who never knew defeat; and Charles, narrowly escaping the fate of his father, only saved his life by a hasty flight. In December, 1653, Oliver Cromwell was acknowledged Lord High Protector of the Commonwealth of England. Possessed of great military genius and decision of character, he had made the name of England great; and, if he had broken down time-honoured institutions, and by violence had robbed England of the priceless

heritage of liberty, he had made some compensation by giving her power and glory and a name in exchange.

Opposed at every step by the loyal Presbyterians, it was not to be supposed that Cromwell would do anything to promote and strengthen the Presbyterian government and discipline set up by Act of Parliament a few years before. His Parliament needlessly irritated the clergy, by passing an Act requiring that marriages should be solemnized before a justice of the peace, and provoked their opposition by endeavouring to take away their tithes without making any provision for their maintenance. He had no disposition to enforce the ordinances passed by the Long Parliament, establishing provincial presbyteries and national synods. In London and Lancashire the Presbyterian government had been fully established before Cromwell assumed the reins of government, and was doing a beneficent work. In many parts of the country, however, government by presbyteries had not been fully set up, and the ministers formed voluntary associations for mutual fellowship and counsel; but these associations had no legal standing and no authoritative power. In these districts Cromwell established boards of commissioners, instead of presbyteries, for the examination and induction of ministers to the pastoral office. Without a certificate from the Triers, as these commissioners were called, composed principally of Independent ministers, no person could hold a benefice or collect the tithes. Such were some of the difficulties against which the

Presbyterian discipline had to contend at its first institution in England.

While Cromwell lived, his power was unlimited and absolute; but, being personal power, the natural outcome of personal genius and high personal character, it could not be transmitted to his son and successor. Thus it was that he who had made England the most formidable power in the world, had failed to become the founder of a new dynasty. Although Richard Cromwell, on the death of his father in December, 1658, was solemnly recognised as chief magistrate, and for a few months seemed securely settled in the chair of State, yet he had no power to control the army—that mighty agency which his father first created, then used and controlled. The elections again give the Presbyterians a majority in the House of Commons. The Independents and other republican sectaries in the army became jealous of the growing power of the Presbyterian party, and the officers disdained to submit to the civil power by professing allegiance to one who was not a soldier. So they had recourse to high-handed measures, as in the days of Oliver, and insisted upon the dissolution of the legally-elected Parliament, and called together the Rump of the Long Parliament, which had been expelled in 1653. It was declared to be the supreme power in the State, the first magistrate and the House of Lords being both set aside.

This bold step brought about a union of the Presbyterians and the Royalists. A common danger com-

pelled them to make common cause against the enemy of all parliamentary institutions. All the chief Presbyterians—Lords Fairfax and Willoughby, the Earls of Manchester and Denbigh, Sir Ashley Cooper, Sir William Waller, Sir George Booth, Sir Horatio Townshend, and many others—pledged themselves to the royal cause. There was no other choice. The tyranny of a republican army was worse than the tyranny of the Stuarts. It was evident that nothing else than an alliance between the Royalists and the Presbyterians could save the State and preserve time-honoured institutions.

The Presbyterians had influence enough to secure the co-operation of the army in Scotland. General Monk declared against the usurped power of the republican government, and marched into England with an army of seven thousand veterans in the highest state of efficiency. Everywhere the popular demand was for a free Parliament, and against the tyranny of the army. The army was broken into factions by jealousies and rivalries, and, lacking cohesion and unity of purpose, was powerless in the impending crisis. Monk, having cautiously felt the pulse of public feeling, and having gauged the strength of the regiments stationed in London, under the advice of leading Presbyterian ministers, declared for a free Parliament, under the full conviction that a free Parliament would restore Charles the Second. As lord-general of all the forces in the kingdom, he disposed the regiments in such a manner as to place the most

disaffected at the greatest distance from the metropolis, where their power to frustrate his designs would be minimised. These precautionary arrangements required time; and, until they were completed, Monk declined openly to declare his intentions, leading many to suppose that he was temporizing. When he had perfected his plans, and had made known his purposes, the whole nation was filled with ecstasy and delight. The Presbyterian members of the Commons who had been expelled by Cromwell's soldiers were restored to their seats. After making provision for carrying on the government, they issued writs for a new Parliament and dissolved. The result was that the new House of Commons was cordially in favour of the royal cause. The Presbyterians were again in the majority. On the 25th of April, 1660, Parliament met, and elected Grimston, a moderate Presbyterian, as speaker. The peers, who had been excluded in 1648, took their seat in the House of Lords on the same day. Thus the ancient constitution of Parliament was restored. At a conference of the two Houses, on 27th April, the Earl of Manchester was instructed to inform the Commons that "the Lords do own and declare that, according to the ancient laws of this kingdom, the government is, and ought to be, by King, Lords, and Commons." Both Houses united in cordially inviting Charles the Second to return to England. On his arrival, on 29th May, he was proclaimed king with such pomp and rejoicings as had never before been witnessed in London.

Of those who had been instrumental in placing Charles II. upon the throne, many were bent upon having the Presbyterian polity fully carried out in the Church according to the ordinances passed in 1647; the Royalists, also a strong party, were in favour of returning to Episcopacy; but moderate men of both parties, headed by Baxter and Usher, would have been satisfied with a compromise, which they hoped would have settled on a satisfactory basis those burning ecclesiastical questions which had agitated the Church and nation ever since the Reformation. Moderate Episcopalians were willing to admit that the bishop might be assisted by a council, or presbytery. Moderate Presbyterians did not object to the title of bishop, and would allow the bishop to be permanent president. A revised liturgy might be prepared to be used in the service, but not to the exclusion of extempore prayer. In the baptismal service the sign of the cross might be left to the discretion of the officiating minister. At the Lord's Supper communicants might sit, whose consciences forbade them to kneel. The surplice might be dispensed with, the black gown alone being used.

It was hoped that by some such compromise as this, the two parties might have been brought together, and that the ecclesiastical affairs of the realm might have been permanently settled in an amicable and satisfactory manner. The Presbyterian party were now in possession, by Act of Parliament, and such proposals show how earnestly desirous they were to

secure peace and harmony in religious matters. The Independents were not to be reckoned with; for there were very few ministers in possession of benefices who had not received either Episcopal or Presbyterial ordination. Moreover, those who held independent principles had gone down in public estimation, on account of their political associations. The Presbyterian clergy were aware that the king had strong leanings towards Episcopacy, although some years before he had signed the Covenant in order to secure the aid of the Scottish Presbyterians. Therefore, they were the more ready to propose a compromise, because thereby they hoped to accommodate the king as well as the Episcopalian party. Archbishop Usher and Bishop Stillingfleet, both men of great learning, pleaded earnestly for a moderate Presbyterianism as more nearly conforming to primitive church polity than modern Episcopacy. The High Church party, however, would make no compromise. Knowing the king's personal predilections, they were confident that in time he would take his stand resolutely in favour of the old religion; and the issue proved their conjecture to have been correct.

The king, however, was prudent enough to take no hasty step in the direction of Episcopacy so long as the Presbyterian party predominated in the House of Commons. He was studiously moderate and conciliatory. He appointed several Presbyterian ministers as his chaplains. He published a manifesto declaring his intention to adopt the proposed compromise, and

promised that no bishop should ordain, or exercise any part of his spiritual jurisdiction, without the advice and assistance of his presbyters. He also declared his intention of appointing an equal number of Presbyterian and Episcopalian divines to revise the liturgy, stating that no minister would be molested for not using it until it was revised and reformed. In reference to ceremonies, he declared that no one would be compelled to receive the sacrament kneeling, nor to use the sign of the cross in baptism, nor to bow at the name of Jesus, nor to wear the surplice, except in cathedrals and royal chapels, nor should the clergy be required to subscribe to the articles that do not relate to doctrine. He also declared that all men would be permitted the free exercise of their religious opinions, so long as they did not disturb the peace of the kingdom.


Had this scheme been legalised, the Protestant Church of England might have sheathed the sword and taken up the olive-branch of peace; and to this day there would have been no murmuring and discontent and agitation in the Church, impairing its usefulness and threatening its very existence. The just contention of the Evangelical Low Church party would have been granted; the Presbyterians would have still been in the bosom of the Church; no Act of Uniformity would have been required, by which 2000 of the most godly ministers of the Church were compelled to leave their benefices and their flocks; no Five-mile Act would have been necessary, forbid-

ding under heavy penalties all nonconforming ministers from coming within five miles of any incorporated town, or any town in which they had previously resided as ministers. All the terrible persecutions of English Puritans and Scottish Covenanters, which have branded the name of Charles the Second with eternal infamy, would have been avoided—godly preachers, like John Bunyan, pining during a great portion of their life in gaol—holy ministers shot down while proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to earnest worshippers on the moors and mountains of Scotland—helpless, unoffending women tied to a stake on the sea-shore till the tide came up and drowned them. Such were the disastrous results of the bigotry of Charles and his court.

CHAPTER XXII.

PERSECUTION OF THE PURITANS AND COVENANTERS.

“ They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”—HEB. xi. 38.

HARLES THE SECOND was not long in forgetting the promises he had made to the Presbyterian party at the time of his restoration. It is certain that he would never have been placed upon the throne of England except by their influence and their hearty co-operation with the Royalists; and all impartial historians agree that they deserved much better treatment at his hands than they received. The issue would seem to clearly prove that the declaration of October, 1660, was made simply to deceive the Presbyterians and throw them off their guard until a new Parliament was elected. While the Presbyterians controlled Parliament, the king was politic enough to make a show of granting their demands. On the dissolution of the convention Parliament, so called because it was not summoned by the king's writ, the wave of popular enthusiasm that welcomed the restoration of monarchy was sufficient to carry the court party into power. In this assembly, the ancient

gentry and High Church party regained their influence. Charles now proceeded to appoint a number of new bishops, but paid no attention to his own declaration a few months before, that a council of presbyters should be appointed to assist and advise with the bishop. This scheme would have given great satisfaction to a large majority in the nation; for it would have materially limited the power of the bishops, without destroying Episcopal supervision. However, the scheme never got beyond the declared intention of the king.

Charles made a show of fulfilling his promise to revise the liturgy; and in May, 1661, called the Savoy Conference, which consisted of twenty-one Anglican divines, and an equal number of Presbyterians. Owing to the haughty temper and bitterness of the High Churchmen, no compromise could be effected. Knowing that they had a majority in Parliament, they resolutely declined to give up any of the ancient ceremonies, and thus all hope of union was frustrated. Of the failure of this conference to effect a reconciliation, Hallam, himself a Churchman, says:—"The chief blame, it cannot be dissembled, ought to fall on the Anglican divines. An opportunity was afforded of healing, in a very great measure, that schism and separation which, if they are to be believed, is one of the worst evils that can befall a Christian community. They had it in their power to retain or expel a vast number of worthy and laborious ministers of the Gospel, with whom they had, in their own estimation,

no essential ground of difference. They knew the king, and consequently themselves, to have been restored with (I might almost say by) the strenuous co-operation of those very men who were now at their mercy. To judge by the rules of moral wisdom, or the spirit of Christianity, there can be no justification for the Anglican party on this occasion."—"Constitutional History," p. 523.

What an immense service would have been rendered to the Church of England, if the moderate demands of the Presbyterians had been granted! Their demands were precisely those of the Evangelical party in our time. They objected to those parts of the service that teach baptismal regeneration; to the lessons taken out of the Apocryphal books; to compulsory kneeling at the sacrament, as savouring of wafer-worship; to the use of the surplice; to the sign of the cross in baptism; to god-fathers being the sponsors in baptism; and to holy-days. In the matter of government they did not demand the abolition of the Episcopal office, but simply that the bishop should be assisted by a council of presbyters. Archbishop Usher and Bishop Stillingfleet, and other moderate Episcopalians, had pleaded ably and earnestly for granting these demands, founding their arguments, not simply upon expediency, but upon Scripture; but the High Church party were more anxious to irritate the Presbyterians than to make any concessions.

When the Act of Uniformity was introduced into Parliament, it was found not only to retain all the

ceremonies to which objection had been taken, but to add a new and more intolerable grievance. It was enacted that every beneficed clergyman, every fellow of a university, and every schoolmaster even, should declare his unfeigned assent and consent to all and every particular contained and prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. The Act of Uniformity also precluded those who came from foreign Protestant Churches from holding any ecclesiastical benefice, except they would submit to Episcopal ordination. Previous to this time, ordination in all Presbyterian and Reformed Churches was recognised as valid. In no instance was re-ordination demanded of any minister who had been ordained by the imposition of hands in a Reformed Church. But the Act of Uniformity, by enacting that no person should hold any ecclesiastical benefice in England without having received Episcopal ordination, excluded those ministers who had been ordained since the Presbyterian government was set up in the Church. It was also enacted that all magistrates, and those holding offices of trust in corporate towns, should abjure the Solemn League and Covenant. In addition to this oath, those elected in future must have taken the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, within a year previous to their election. These stringent measures were enacted with the intention of crushing the Presbyterians.

The provisions of the Act of Uniformity were to come in force on St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August,

1662. All who refused to conform were to be deprived of their benefices, without having any provision made for their maintenance. St. Bartholomew's Day was fixed upon, in order that those who were deprived might lose the tithes of the whole previous year, the tithes not being due till after that date. The Roman Catholics who were deprived in the reign of Elizabeth, were allowed one-fifth of the tithes for maintenance. The same provision was allowed by the Presbyterians of the Long Parliament to all who refused to accept the Solemn League and Covenant. But the Parliament of Charles II. refused, by a majority of seven, to make any allowance whatever to those who would refuse to conform.

A greater injustice—in fact a cruel severity, for which there can be no palliation—was practised upon these godly and conscientious ministers. They were required to give their unfeigned assent and consent to all and every particular in the Book of Common Prayer, with the new corrections and additions. One of the additions was the Apocryphal story of Bel and the Dragon, added to spite the Presbyterians, because they demanded the exclusion of the whole of the Apocrypha from the services of the sanctuary. With such precipitancy was this severe statute carried out that when Bartholomew's Day came round, very few copies of the corrections and additions were issued. The great majority of the clergy, therefore, had either to give their “unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything” in a book which they had never seen, or

be ejected from their benefices. This was certainly the refinement of cruelty—a severity which one would have pronounced impossible in a Christian country, if it were not an historical fact. No wonder the Presbyterians compared this day to St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572, when 30,000 French Protestants were cruelly butchered by the Roman Catholics under the approval of another Charles. When the appointed day arrived, no less than 2000 godly Presbyterian ministers resigned their livings, giving up all except their integrity and their faith in God, rather than defile their consciences by complying with ceremonies and assenting to doctrines which they knew to be unscriptural and dishonouring to Christ. History does not record a nobler act of self-devotion and heroic virtue by any body of men than was displayed by the Presbyterian clergy on that memorable day.

The Presbyterian ministers, in their extremity, appealed to the king to grant them toleration in their nonconformity. The king, touched by the remembrance of the eminent service rendered to him by the Presbyterian party, promised to issue a declaration granting toleration for three months. However, this humane suggestion was so vehemently opposed by the bishops, that the king was compelled to yield to their cruel intolerance. Charles still sought to redeem his promise, and published a declaration in favour of toleration and liberty of conscience. But the High Church party in Parliament had set their hearts on stamping out Nonconformity, and objected to any

scheme of toleration or indulgence, as likely only to increase sectaries, and produce agitation and disturbance rather than promote peace.

In the following year, 1664, an Act was passed for suppressing religious gatherings of Nonconformists. The ejected clergy, in leaving the Established Church, carried with them the more godly portion of their flocks; and, being earnest and acceptable preachers, great numbers were leaving the Church and were flocking to hear them. In order to check this efflux of the people from the Church, it was enacted that all persons above sixteen years of age found present at any religious meeting other than is allowed by the practice of the Church of England, where five or more persons, besides the household, should be present, would be liable to imprisonment for three months for the first offence, six months for the second, and for the third transportation for seven years. An idea of the rigour of this law may be obtained by reflecting that, if five persons attended an ordinary cottage prayer-meeting, they would each incur the penalty of imprisonment for three months. What were these two thousand ejected ministers and their myriads of followers to do under these trying circumstances? They could not attend the services of the Church which had so ruthlessly cast them out. That would be giving the lie to their own act and their own conscience. They could not refrain from coming together to worship the God whom they loved and served. That would have been disobeying the command, "See that

ye forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is ;” and they were bound to obey God rather than man. They therefore assembled, always peacefully and as privately as possible, speaking evil of no man. But in a short time the gaols were filled with praying men and women ; for the laity who attended the meetings were arrested as well as the ministers who conducted them. Such was the Christian liberty enjoyed in England in the latter half of the seventeenth century, when intolerant bishops and bigoted Churchmen controlled the councils of the nation.

One would have thought that such a severe measure would have satisfied the most rapacious cruelty of intolerant persecutors. But, inflamed by passion, and intoxicated by success, the very next year further repressive measures are demanded and obtained. In 1665, it was enacted that all persons in holy orders, who had not subscribed the Act of Uniformity, should take an oath declaring that they would not at any time seek to obtain any alteration of government either in Church or in State. All who refused to take this oath were prohibited from coming within five miles of any city, or borough, or corporate town, or any place where they had previously exercised their ministry.

These Presbyterian ministers must have been recognised as a mighty power in the land, and Presbyterian principles and worship must have been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, before such iniquitous and

tyrannical measures should be considered necessary to silence the ministers and crush the cause. No higher compliment could have been paid to these noble men and their ministry than that such rigorous measures were considered necessary to suppress them.

During the session of 1664, the Established clergy petitioned the House of Commons to increase the fine of one shilling for each absence from Divine service, "in proportion to the degree, quality, and ability of the delinquent; that so the penalty may be of force sufficient to conquer the obstinacy of the Nonconformists." The Archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops vied with each other in urging the magistrates to disperse all religious gatherings of Nonconformists. The king issued a proclamation enjoining the magistrates to be diligent in this matter.

While persecution was rife, and the prisons were filled with godly men for no other crime than worshipping God according to His Word, a succession of dire calamities swept over the kingdom like a tempest of avenging wrath, which many looked upon as direct judgments from heaven upon a licentious Court and a persecuting Parliament. In 1665 an awful pestilence, surpassing in horror any scourge that had visited England for centuries, carried off in six months more than one hundred thousand human beings. The atmosphere of London was so deadly that Parliament held its session at Oxford. The deadly plague was scarcely stayed when, in 1666, London was desolated by a fire which swept over the whole city from the

Tower to the Temple. And during the next summer the English fleet was burned by the Dutch in the Medway. Such a succession of terrible calamities filled the minds of the nation with dread and dismay.

In Scotland as well as in England the Presbyterians were cruelly deceived by the faithless Charles and his intolerant Parliament. Presbytery was placed under the ban and Episcopacy set up, to the unspeakable disgust of the people, for nearly thirty years. Four hundred Presbyterian clergymen were ejected from their benefices; for, like their brethren in England, they were prepared to suffer persecution, rather than submit to have a religion imposed upon them by force against which they and their fathers had so solemnly protested.

An Act passed in 1661 made it treasonable to deny the king's supreme power in all matters, civil or religious; the National Covenant and Solemn League were condemned as unlawful oaths; and the ordering of the government of the Church was claimed to be an inherent and inalienable right of the Crown. This high-handed treachery on the part of the king, who less than a year before had sworn to the Solemn League and Covenant to secure the assistance of the Presbyterians in placing him upon the throne, so exasperated the masses of the people against the perfidious Charles, that they would not listen for a moment to his insidious proposals to overturn the government and discipline of their Church. They echoed the dying words of the noble Marquis of Argyll, the first

to suffer for "Christ's Crown and Covenant." "God," he said, "hath laid engagements on Scotland. We are bound by solemn covenants to religion and reformation; and it passeth the power of all the magistrates under heaven to absolve us from the oath of God. These times are like to be either very sinning or very suffering times, and let Christians make their choice. There is a sad dilemma in the business—SIN or SUFFER; and surely he that will choose the better part will choose to suffer." These prophetic words proved to be too terribly true. Such a tale of suffering and woe has scarcely ever been told, as the story of all that these noble devoted Covenanters suffered for conscience and for Christ during the reign of Charles the Second and his brother James. Excluded from the churches, they held their meetings in private. Driven from their conventicles, as these private meetings were called, they held their meetings in the glens, in the woods, on moor or mountain-side, armed in self-defence; for they knew not at what hour the troopers, who hunted them and shot them down like deer, would fall upon them. No legal trial was necessary. If a man was found praying, or with a Bible on his person, he was shot dead on the spot. If any one—woman or child—refused to reveal the hiding-place of friends, they were tortured and killed. The records of pagan history may be searched in vain for any parallel to such unprovoked scenes of carnage and butchery, as were witnessed in the south-west of Scotland during the occupation of the country by the fiendish Claver-

house and his murderous dragoons. Seventeen hundred persons, for no other offence than refusing to acknowledge Episcopacy, were banished to the West Indies and sold as slaves. One hundred and forty had the consideration shown them of being permitted to go through the form of a mock trial before being hanged, or beheaded, or quartered alive. But this was too tedious and toilsome a process for the inhuman wretches who directed the murderous persecution. So, to expedite matters, every officer and every soldier were granted plenary powers to massacre indiscriminately every one—men, women, and children—suspected of any complicity with the Covenanters. There is no complete record of the thousands who fell in this indiscriminate slaughter ; but many a stone monument throughout the country preserves the names of a great number who took a prominent part in these stirring scenes. For twenty-eight long years the weary work went on, until humanity again asserted itself on the arrival of William, Prince of Orange, in 1688. The despotism and tyranny of the Stuarts had spent their force in goading the English and Scottish people to madness, and the nation rose in its might and spurned their tyrant sway.

The intolerance and despotism of Episcopacy had brought about a similar fate for the reign of bishops in Scotland. The blood-thirsty policy of Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews, was probably never equalled by any tyrant in modern times, except perhaps by another bishop, the bloody Bonner, in the reign of

Mary Tudor. The Scottish nation had learned, during the short rule of the bishops, that intolerance and Episcopacy were inseparably linked together; and they determined, on the accession of the Prince of Orange, to have Presbytery established for ever as the national religion of Scotland.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EMINENT PURITANS.

“And now men see not the bright light that is in the clouds, but the wind passeth and cleanseth them.”—JOB xxxvii. 21.

WHILE persecution raged, great men were being produced—men of noble life and steadfast faith in God, men of conscience and fidelity to truth, men who could suffer in obscurity for Christ and His Gospel rather than bask in the sunshine of courtly favour. In the good providence of God, persecution may carry with it a twofold blessing. It not only purifies the Church by excluding unworthy members, but it helps to bring out in bold relief the courage and self-denial, and genuine humility, of the faithful followers of Christ. These results were produced among the English Puritans and Scottish Covenanters by the trying and testing persecution under Charles the Second. Outstanding and pre-eminent among the Puritans were Baxter, and Bunyan, and Howe. Baxter and Bunyan had each the opportunity of proving the power and blessedness of the religion of Christ within the walls of the prison-house, and Howe had been an exile from his country on ac-

count of his fidelity to conscience and the Word of God.

However, persecution does not last for ever. Dark clouds may for a time obscure the sun, and bring storm and tempest, with all their blighting and desolating effects ; but ere long there will appear a rift in the clouds, and the " bright light " will gild the frowning storm-cloud with glory and with beauty. The storm and the tempest are but the chartered purifiers of the atmosphere and the waters. By the tempest's shock the stately oak is more deeply rooted in the virgin soil, and is thereby made secure against the hurricane-blast. So the fierce blasts of persecution purify and strengthen the men of faith, who " hold fast the form of sound words," determined never to swerve from the path of duty.

The English and Scottish Presbyterians had successfully passed through the period of testing and trial, and now there is a rift in the clouds. James the Second had scarcely been seated on the throne, when he experienced difficulties with his Parliament. A Roman Catholic at heart, he determined to grant relief to the devotees of Rome. How was this to be done in a nation decidedly Protestant, and with a Parliament quite as strongly attached to the Established Church as to the king ? He first endeavoured to secure the co-operation of the Anglican party to his scheme of relieving the Roman Catholics, by promising them advancement, and by agreeing to proscribe the Puritans. For a time, all the laws which bore heavily

against the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Independents, were enforced with great severity. In this way he hoped to gain the confidence of the Anglican party in a sufficient degree to cause them at least to connive at the advancement of Roman Catholics. His Parliament, however, was thoroughly Protestant, and withstood him. The clergy and the gentry also declined to give any countenance to proceedings intended to aggrandise Rome at the expense of Protestant principles. Foiled in this scheme, the king, determined to succeed in his favourite enterprise of advancing Roman Catholicism, had recourse to other methods. He dare not encounter the opposition or provoke the hostility of all his Protestant subjects at the same time. If he is to succeed in his enterprise, he must secure at least the goodwill of either of the powerful parties in the State—the Anglicans or the Puritans. And, having failed with the Church, he will now make overtures to Dissent. If he can only succeed in conciliating the different sections of Protestant Nonconformity, he need not apprehend any serious consequences from the supporters of the Church. The superior clergy, vieing with each other in recent years in expressions of loyalty to the Crown, in opposition to the doctrines of the Nonconformists, had diligently taught the people that no circumstances could possibly arise which would justify the nation in lifting up its hand against the Lord's anointed. Such a theory was certainly a dangerous weapon to put into the hands of a Stuart. The Anglican hierarchy, however, had forged the

weapon, and had ostentatiously presented it to royalty in order to convince the Crown that they, and not the Puritans, were the party to whom royal favours ought to be dispensed. If the king should now employ against themselves the weapons which they had prepared for the destruction of their foes, they will have only themselves to blame. It is only an illustration of a great truth, that false and fulsome flattery sooner or later will surely fail in its purpose.

The king, therefore, apprehending no serious danger from the Anglican party, and knowing that he could not grant full liberty to Roman Catholics to the exclusion of Protestant Nonconformists, without inciting to open rebellion, dismissed his Parliament, and, on his own sole authority, published a Declaration of Indulgence, 4th April, 1687. By this declaration he suspended all penal laws against the several sections of Nonconformists in England. Roman Catholics and Nonconformists were granted protection in the free exercise of their religion. They were allowed to meet in public assembly; and any one who dared to molest them in their worship would incur the king's displeasure. This full toleration, however, was not extended to the Covenanters in Scotland. But in England the Puritans had a breathing time.

This turn in affairs filled the Anglican party with alarm. The king—the nominal head of the Church—was a Roman Catholic, and was plotting for its destruction. The Puritans, who a few years before ruled Parliament, were now to be favoured, and might

rise again to supreme power in both Church and State. A marvellous change came over the minds and conduct of High Churchmen. Anglican divines drew nearer to the Presbyterian clergy. They were loud and earnest in condemning the severe treatment to which the Puritans had been subjected during recent years. They were anxious to lay the blame on the king and the court. The court as diligently hurled back the charge upon the hierarchy and the Established clergy. The Protestant Nonconformists were regarded as holding the balance of power between the king and the Church, and both were eagerly bidding for their favour and support. The leaders of the Anglican party were ready to make concessions that would satisfy all moderate Presbyterians. Baxter and Howe would be made Bishops, and such reforms would be introduced as would enable them with a good conscience to adorn the Episcopal bench.

During this year, modest places of worship, of plain Puritan type, were erected throughout all England. Presbyterian ministers who, during recent years, were not permitted to address an assembly of more than five persons, nor come within five miles of any market town, now preached to multitudes in the metropolis and elsewhere. Baxter, who had spent eighteen months in prison, was not only set at liberty, but was assured that he might reside in London, without having any apprehensions that the provisions of the Five-mile Act would be enforced against him. Howe returned from exile, and the king in person pressed him to use his

influence with the Presbyterians, in order to induce them to favour his scheme. Many of the Independents, and several other small sects, had declared for the king, and subscribed addresses of thanks for the Declaration of Indulgence. The Presbyterians, however, stood firm. Baxter, and Howe, and other influential leaders, were not to be corrupted by fair promises, and nobly refused to purchase personal freedom and promotion at the expense of Protestant principles. Their duty clearly was to take their stand with Protestant Churchmen against the popish devices of the king, and they proved equal to the occasion. The Presbyterian ministers assembled, and agreed to decline to commit themselves to the policy of the king by joining in any address of thanks for the Indulgence. The Declaration, though granting immediate relief to Nonconformists, was unconstitutional, being a mere arbitrary act of the king without the consent of Parliament. Moreover, it was impossible to put any confidence in the sincerity of James. If the Protestant Nonconformists had assisted him in furthering the designs of the Jesuits, because they would derive immediate advantage, the Protestant religion might have been placed in jeopardy; for James had no affection for anything Puritan or Presbyterian, although he would gladly accept their assistance in paving the way for Roman Catholic aggrandisement.

With the names of Howe and Baxter must be linked the name of another distinguished and influential man. This was John Bunyan, the author of

“The Pilgrim’s Progress” and other masterly works. Born in 1628, he was two years older than Howe, but considerably younger than Baxter, who had now attained the ripe age of seventy-two. Much inferior to the Presbyterian worthies in education and personal influence, in genius he excelled all men of his time. After passing through a terrible experience and deep religious conviction, during which he had despaired of mercy, and imagined that he was possessed with a devil, and had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, eventually the clouds broke, and heavenly light streamed in upon his dark and disordered mind. His first impulse was to become a preacher. Seeking no ordination, he went to work in his own way. With scarcely any knowledge of literature, except the Bible and Foxe’s “Book of Martyrs,” his ready oratory arrested and aroused his hearers. Drawing from the inexhaustible stores of his own marvellous experience, he could describe the doubts, and fears, and struggles of those who listened to him, laying bare their whole inner life like one inspired. Like other godly Nonconformist preachers, he had to pay the penalty of his zeal. Of the twenty-five years that had elapsed since the passing of the Act of Uniformity, he had spent twelve in prison. He, therefore, knew well what it was to suffer for Christ and the Gospel. He had tasted the bitterness of persecution, and, consequently, could appreciate the sweets of liberty. Almost more than any other, therefore, he might have been tempted to hail with delight the

Declaration of Indulgence. However, like Baxter and Howe, and the great body of the Presbyterians, his shrewd common sense enabled him to see that toleration to Dissenters was only intended as a blind to the Puritan party, and he declined to take the bait.

The resolute stand taken by Howe, and Baxter, and Bunyan, exerted a considerable influence upon many of those Dissenters who were favourably disposed towards the policy of the king. The danger of complying with the king's overtures soon became manifest. What the Presbyterian leaders had prescience enough to foresee soon came to pass. Those ministers who had formed an alliance with the court at once changed their tone in reference to the Church of Rome. Having set their heart upon retaining the king's favour, they could no longer oppose his religion. Never since the Reformation were the Roman Catholics so zealous in spreading their tenets and in making proselytes. Never during the last hundred years was the Protestant religion in such imminent danger. Still, those ministers who had been won over to the king uttered no word of warning from their pulpits. The very men who were loudest in their condemnation of the papal system, a few months before, were now suspiciously silent and obsequious.

This unnatural alliance between the sectaries and the court caused the Anglicans and Puritans to unite for the interests of their common Protestantism. In the Prince of Orange they had a leader who commanded the confidence of both parties. He was a sound Pro-

testant, and was thoroughly in sympathy with Puritan theology. He did not regard Episcopacy as a Divine institution, although he approved of it as a convenient and orderly form of Church government. He personally preferred the simple ritual of the Presbyterian Church, in which he had been brought up, but would have no scruples in adopting the ritual that would be found most agreeable to the wishes of the nation. The one point of ecclesiastical policy on which he insisted with commendable firmness was, that he should not be expected to proscribe or persecute any of his fellow Protestants whose consciences prevented them from conforming to the established religion. He would be willing to relieve Roman Catholics from all penal statutes, although it would not be wise or politic to admit them to offices of public trust. According to the constitution, the king had the power of naming almost all the functionaries of Church and State. Therefore, if Roman Catholics were not excluded by statute, a king in sympathy with Jesuits, as James was known to be, might appoint to the highest offices of the State only Roman Catholics. Recently James had largely availed himself of this prerogative, and in open defiance of law had filled the principal offices with those who were either openly or secretly in communion with Rome.

In April, 1688, James issued a second Declaration of Indulgence, announcing his fixed intention to adhere to the previous Declaration, notwithstanding the opposition it met with in the nation. He made an order

in council that the Declaration of Indulgence should be read on two successive Sundays in all the churches and chapels in the kingdom. The time was short, and there was little opportunity for securing concerted action. The bishops feared that if they refused to read the Declaration, the Puritans might misunderstand their action, and accuse them of being opposed to having toleration extended to them. However, Baxter, Howe, Bates, and other leading Nonconformists, at once came forward and united with the bishops in defending the Constitution, and resolved not to be parties to the publication of an illegal document. The bishops drew up a petition to the king to this effect. Their conduct was much applauded by all true-hearted Protestants. When the appointed day arrived, the Declaration was read in only four of the hundred parish churches in London and the district; and in each case the worshippers retired and left the officiating curate to read it to empty pews. Samuel Wesley, father of Charles and John Wesley, then a curate in London, took for his text the brave words of the three Hebrew worthies who were cast into the fiery furnace: "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Baxter, from his pulpit, commended, in the highest terms, the conduct and courage of the bishops and clergy. On that day the bishops rose so high in the estimation of the Puritans, that the memory of twenty-five years' bitter persecution seemed to have been obliterated. They had rallied round the old Protes-

tant banner, and every Puritan felt that they deserved the gratitude of the nation. The king had them summoned before him, and committed for seditious libel. After spending one week in the Tower, they were brought to trial; and when the jury brought in a verdict of Not Guilty, the joy of the nation knew no bounds.

Thus the fate of the famous Declaration of Indulgence, while it brought dismay to the king and the Catholic party, cemented the different sections of Protestantism in indissoluble bonds of friendship. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Independents, for the time buried their differences and stood shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy. A great need had produced a grand fusion of parties who had long been separated by mutual jealousies and bitter recriminations. Thus apparent evil often brings about the greatest good.

The trial of the bishops produced a wonderful change in the minds and convictions of High Churchmen and Tories. Hitherto they regarded the will of the king as absolute, and resistance as a criminal violation of human and Divine law. Now, however, stern necessity had taught them that their theory was erroneous, and might become destructive to law as well as to liberty. A king, in the exercise of the royal prerogative, may become a tyrant. He may determine to break down the institutions which he promised to uphold. In such a case there is no choice between resistance and slavery. James II. became a

tyrant, and they were bound to resist his imperious will. Thus the doctrine of passive obedience, so diligently taught and promulgated at the restoration of Charles II., received its death-blow in the stirring events of 1688.

On the very day on which the bishops were acquitted, an invitation was sent to William, Prince of Orange, the king's son-in-law, to assume the crown of England. He arrived in November. Emblazoned on his banner was the significant motto, "I will maintain the liberties of England and the Protestant religion." James fled, and William III. and Mary ascended the throne as joint king and queen of England.

William's first Parliament passed the charter of religious liberty, known as the Toleration Act. It provided that the penal statutes against Nonconformists, passed in previous reigns, should not be construed to extend to any person who should testify his loyalty by taking the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and his Protestantism by subscribing the Declaration against Transubstantiation. Dissenting ministers were allowed to exercise their functions by professing their belief in the doctrinal articles of the Church of England. They were not required to assent to those articles that relate to ceremonies, the ordination service, and the doctrinal teaching of the Book of Homilies. However, no indulgence was granted to any papist, or to any one who denied the doctrine of the Trinity. Toleration was granted only within certain prescribed limits; but none of the leading men

of any of the sections of Protestant Nonconformity, would have concurred with tolerating any and every teacher of heretical doctrine who might choose to publish his offensive opinions.

Bunyan did not live to enjoy this freedom, having gone to his rest and reward a few months before William arrived in England. Three years later, the holy Baxter entered into the saints' everlasting rest, leaving behind him hallowed memories dear to every godly man.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE RISE OF METHODISM.

“Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”—LUKE xiv. 23.

WITH the close of the seventeenth century, the labours of the great majority of the 2000 Presbyterian ministers, ejected from their livings in 1662, came to an end. Amid terrible trials and persistent persecution, they bravely fought the good fight of faith, and wore out their precious lives in defence of the truth. One by one, the princely leaders of this noble band were summoned home,—Richard Baxter, in 1691; Samuel Annesley, in 1696; John Howe, in 1705; Matthew Henry, son of Philip Henry, one of the “ejected,” in 1714. Great occasions usually make great men; and it is no less true that in the good providence of God great men—men of noble purpose and brave heart—are raised up for great and trying occasions. Such men, as a rule, have no direct successors; and after they pass away there is usually a dearth of true disinterested greatness. To some extent this was the condition of the Church in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Among the

Nonconformists there was but little inducement for capable men to devote themselves to the ministry. There was no certainty that any extended sphere of usefulness would be open to them. The one thing to which they could look forward with certainty, was the unmitigated opposition and abuse of the High Church party both in Church and in State. The fine outburst of fraternal feeling which marked the union of both sections of Churchmen with all moderate Nonconformists, in 1689, passed away like the early dew of morning. It was, indeed, a beautiful sight to see bishops of the Church of England and learned Presbyterian divines entering the presence chamber in company, and to hear the bishop, in the presence of the king, refer to the Presbyterian ministers as his respected and beloved friends. A common danger had done what, alas! a common Christianity too often fails to do—it made them realise their brotherhood. But, as the cause which produced the fusion was only temporary, so the union was but of short duration. When the Low Church party, in order to open a door for the Presbyterians to enter the Established Church, proposed to modify the polity and ceremonial of the Church; when they declared that Episcopacy and the liturgy were not essential to a true Christian Church, but might be dispensed with or modified, they brought down upon their heads a tempest of wrath from all High Churchmen. It was abundantly evident, therefore, that it was the spirit of selfishness, and not the Spirit of Christ, that was the prime factor in bringing

about this short-lived union. So soon as the safety of the Established Church and Protestantism was secured, the High Church party at once turned their backs upon their allies, who had so nobly stood in the breach and won for them the victory.

While William, whose sympathies were entirely with the Low Church party and the Presbyterians, was on the throne, High Churchmen were held in check. However, when on his death in 1702, he was succeeded by his wife's sister, Anne, the High Church party soon became dominant in the State. In 1711 they secured the passing of an Act making it illegal for all persons in places of profit or trust, and all councilmen in corporations, to attend any meeting for Divine worship—where there were above ten persons besides the members of the family present—in which the Book of Common Prayer was not used. All such persons on conviction forfeited their place of trust or profit, and were made incapable of any public employment, until they should make oath that for a whole year together they had not attended any conventicle. This measure was followed by an Act for preventing the growth of schism, enforcing and extending the Act of Charles II., making it compulsory on all school-masters, and all teachers in private families, to make a declaration of conformity to the Established Church before the bishop, and to obtain a license from him. The spirit of intolerance, checked for a time under the reign of William III., had now broke out with such fierce animosity that, to quote the words of Hallam,

“it is impossible to doubt for an instant, that if the queen’s life had preserved the Tory government for a few years, every vestige of toleration would have been effaced.”—“Constitutional History,” p. 771.

Under these circumstances, it is evident that the Nonconformists cannot be held responsible for the great spiritual deadness that prevailed in England during the first part of the eighteenth century. Every earnest conscientious man among them was silenced. But there was still one potent influence quietly doing its work, leavening the more intelligent portion of the community. Good Matthew Henry had left behind him his excellent practical “Commentary on the Bible.” And, if Presbyterian ministers were denied the liberty of preaching and teaching, the evangelical spirit of Presbyterianism was preserved and transmitted to posterity through this silent agency. There can be no doubt but that this great work, equally prized by evangelical Churchmen and Nonconformists, was a mighty factor in preparing the nation for the more active evangelism of Wesley and Whitefield.

Of the spiritual deadness of the Church, and the lack of zeal and earnestness among the clergy of this time, Bishop Burnet says, writing in the year 1708, “I have lamented during my whole life that I saw so little true zeal among our clergy. I saw much of it in the clergy of the Church of Rome, though it is both ill-directed and ill-conducted. I saw much zeal likewise among the foreign Churches. The Dissenters have a great deal among them. But I must own

that the main body of our clergy has always appeared dead and lifeless to me, and, instead of animating one another, they seem rather to lay one another asleep." Then, addressing the clergy, he adds, "Without a visible alteration in this, you will fall under an universal contempt, and lose both the credit and fruits of your ministry." Of the ignorance of the clergy he says, "The much greater part of those who come to me to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. Those who have read some few books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures."

Such was the lamentable state of affairs within the Church. The clergy forsook the Bible for the study of natural religion. Rationalism and infidelity had become fashionable in literary circles. The infidel writings of Hobbes and Shaftesbury were eagerly read by the clergy, as well as by the laity. Deism and Scepticism had received an immense impetus through the subtle speculations of Hume, and the brilliant genius of Gibbon. The eloquence and satire of Voltaire and Rousseau had gilded their indecent and shameless caricatures of Christianity with such a charm, that the gay and thoughtless devotees of fashion received their writings as a new revelation. This new revelation they eagerly embraced, because it was in entire harmony with their own corrupt desires. Through such influences as these, manners and morals had, humanly speaking, become incurably corrupt. A brilliant galaxy of literary men had indeed

endeavoured to stem the terrible tide of corruption and ungodliness, which threatened to destroy every sentiment of religion, and even the very instincts of humanity. Addison, in chaste and elegant language, pleaded ably for the much neglected Christian virtues, and did something towards regenerating public taste and morals. Berkeley, with cogent logic and most fascinating language, made a vigorous onslaught upon the subtle scepticism of the Freethinkers. Samuel Johnson rose in the might of his great intellectual strength, and dealt deadly blows against every form of irreligion and false doctrine. They were manly teachers of a sound morality; and all honour to them for the part they performed in exposing the vices of their day, in reforming public morals, and in refining literary taste.

However, something more than sound moral teaching was necessary to regenerate the nation. There must be real spiritual life. And this greatest and best of all gifts to men must come through the power of the Spirit of God, and the Word of God. The Gospel of Christ must be proclaimed to the people, and be brought home to their hearts by the Divine Spirit with convincing and converting power, if there is to be any real and permanent reformation of life. This was England's great need at this time; and God in His great mercy was raising up earnest gifted men to meet that need.

The great revival of spiritual life that makes the middle of the eighteenth century an important epoch

in the history of evangelical religion in England, is closely associated with the names of John and Charles Wesley, and their eloquent and energetic co-labourer, George Whitefield. And it is especially interesting to note that the "founder of Methodism" was lineally descended from the godly ministers who suffered for conscience sake, and were ejected from their livings when Episcopacy displaced Presbytery on the accession of Charles the Second. His great-grandfather, Bartholomew Wesley, joined the Puritan party in the time of Charles I., and was a clergyman of the Presbyterian Church of England until Episcopacy was again set up in the Established Church. He was one of the two thousand who refused to conform in 1662, and suffered severe persecution for conscience and for Christ, being forbidden by the Five-mile Act to come within five miles of any of his former parishes, or any market town. His grandfather, John Wesley, was also one of the "ejected" ministers. He was imprisoned four times by his relentless persecutors, because he would not desist from preaching the Gospel. At the early age of thirty-four, broken down by continuous suffering and hardships, he found repose in heaven. He was a most earnest and faithful minister of the Word, and an able theologian. His aged father, broken down by persecution and grief for his son, soon joined him in the heavenly land. Wesley's father, Samuel Wesley, whose father and grandfather both had their days shortened by persecution, fearing perhaps, to face this terrible ordeal, entered the mini-

stry of the Established Church. Hence, John Wesley, born in 1703, and Charles Wesley, born in 1708, were brought up within the pale of the Church.

Their gifted mother, justly styled "the Mother of Methodism," also came from a noble Presbyterian family—her father, Dr. Samuel Annesley, nephew of the Earl of Anglesea, being one of the ejected Presbyterian ministers. Dr. Annesley was regarded by many as a second Paul, so abundant was he in labours, and so wholly devoted to Christ. Susanna Annesley was a lady of rare ability, beauty, and refinement, and, withal, profoundly pious. Her rich intellectual endowments, as well as her orderly, methodical habits were transmitted in a great measure to her accomplished sons.

The great Methodist revival, which was soon to bulk so largely in the history of evangelical religion, had a very small beginning. Four earnest young men, desiring to maintain a closer walk with God while pursuing their studies at Oxford, met daily for prayer and the study of God's Word. Two of the members of this "Holy Club," as they were called, were Charles and John Wesley. They commenced to meet in 1729. In a few years they were joined by James Hervey, George Whitefield, and several others. The term "Methodist," which had been previously used to designate certain religious sects, was first applied to them in jest by a fellow-student, and may have been suggested by their strict methodical lives.

The members of the Holy Club gave themselves up to quiet meditation and prayer, fasting, labours of

love, such as visiting the sick and those in prison, and reading to poor families the precious Word of God. They pondered over the marvellous pages of Thomas à Kempis, which filled them with holy longings to imitate the life of Christ. Whitefield and the Wesleys were also powerfully affected by the study of Law's "Serious Call," and Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying." As yet, however, they had not found peace with God, and had no assurance of being "accepted in the Beloved." They had not felt the quickening touch of the Divine Spirit, regenerating their lives and giving them power in service. This precious experience was still in the future.

In October, 1735, the Wesleys and two of their companions set sail for America on a mission to the Indians. During a severe storm at sea, they were greatly struck at the calm behaviour of a number of Moravians, who, in the midst of great danger and the near prospect of death, betrayed no signs of fear, but with perfect composure continued singing their hymns of faith and trust. John Wesley asked them if the women and children were not afraid, and received the beautiful answer, "No; our women and children are not afraid to die." Although he had believed in Jesus as the Saviour of men, yet he had not been saved from fear. He knew nothing as yet of the precious doctrine of union to Christ, and being safe in Him.

Their mission to America was a failure, for the simple reason that they were not fully equipped for

service. They must tarry at Jerusalem until they are endued with power from on high. Whitefield, after passing through a most painful and protracted struggle, entered into liberty, and attained "full assurance of faith," in 1736, and shortly after was ordained to the ministry by the Bishop of Gloucester. Under the influence of the Moravians in London, in May 1738, Charles and John Wesley found peace and joy through simple faith in the sinner's Saviour. And with peace came a gracious sense of pardon and power in service.

Whitefield at his ordination consecrated himself, body, soul, and spirit, to the service of God, to do His will and to seek His glory only. For a time he resumed his labours at Oxford. He visited London, and the whole city was moved. Multitudes flocked to hear him. At Bristol and other places he preached and catechised, with similar results. On week-days the churches were crowded at five o'clock in the morning. By his earnestness, and eloquence, and pathos, he seldom failed to thrill his hearers, and to melt the multitude to tears. This marvellous work was going on while Wesley was on the Atlantic, returning from America. At Wesley's earnest solicitation he set out for America, and, after labouring zealously for four months, returned to England.

In the beginning of 1739, Whitefield and the Wesleys were all at work in England. Their earnestness, and the excitement which attended their meetings, caused many of the churches to be closed against them. Thus God in His good providence was opening up a path to

more extended usefulness. If they cannot preach in the churches, they can do as Jesus did, and as the Scottish Covenanters had done in the previous century, proclaim the glad tidings of salvation on the hillsides and in the fields. Whitefield was the first to propose this course, and the first to carry it out in practice. At Kingswood, where there was no church he took his stand upon a mound and preached the Gospel to about two hundred colliers. The next day, two thousand eager listeners hung upon his words. And, in a short time, his audience increased to ten and even twenty thousand. He next tried his new methods at Bristol, his native city, and preached to thousands on a large bowling-green. The work was so successful, that he invited Wesley to come to his assistance. Wesley had some scruples about preaching in the open air, being very tenacious of old methods. However, he came and saw Whitefield addressing a multitude of men and women which no church could contain, and he was convinced that the work was owned of God, and immediately threw his whole soul into it. Whitefield, always the pioneer, left Wesley to carry on his work, and hastened to open up a new field in Wales. He found that Griffith Jones had already commenced to preach in the open air, the churches being too small to accommodate the vast congregations that flocked to hear him. Howell Harris, a man full of zeal and of the Holy Ghost, had for three years been preaching, twice mostly every day, throughout the Principality. Whitefield first met him at Cardiff. They joined hands and hearts, and went

to work for the Master, preaching to weeping crowds within the churches, and to mocking multitudes without. Whitefield addressed the people in English, and Harris followed him in Welsh. And thus the glorious work went on throughout the kingdom.

Whitefield was the mighty preacher, thrilling and subduing stubborn hearts, and drawing multitudes to hear the sound of the Gospel. Wesley was the shrewd and skilful organizer, always forming societies, thus garnering the results of Whitefield's labours, and giving permanency to his work. The one was the complement of the other, each being necessary to the other's success—at least during the earlier days of the movement.

A divergence of opinion on the doctrine of Predestination between Whitefield and Wesley, led to a temporary separation. However, as in the case of Paul and Barnabas, their dissension tended rather to the furtherance of the Gospel. Each of them was well qualified to lead a great popular movement, and to gather helpers around him; and by their separation the way was opened for the employment of lay preachers, who have done such noble service for both branches of Methodism.

Whitefield, in the controversy with Wesley, adhered to the doctrinal standards of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland in the matters in dispute; and on this account was welcomed and assisted by evangelical clergymen of both these Churches. In Scotland, his labours resulted in a most wonderful

revival of spiritual life. In London, the spacious Tabernacle built for him proved altogether inadequate to accommodate the multitudes that flocked to hear him; so that he was compelled to preach in the fields, as many as twenty, and even thirty, thousand attending the services. He visited America thirteen times during the thirty-four years of his laborious ministry, moving the multitudes wherever he went; and it has been estimated that in New England alone about fifty thousand were converted under his ministry. On the 30th of September, 1770, he responded to the call from heaven, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." His mortal remains still repose in a vault under the pulpit of the Old South Presbyterian Church, Newburyport, Massachusetts, which originated under his ministry, and where he won so many signal triumphs. Although no modern sect bears his name, yet his influence was immense, not only over the masses of England, but in giving tone and power to the Calvinistic Methodism of Wales, and stimulus and strength to the Presbyterianism of America and Scotland. This "prince of preachers" in thirty-four years preached no less than eighteen thousand sermons, an average of ten per week during the entire course of his ministry. No words could more accurately describe the man and his mission than those of Dr Abel Stevens, the historian of Methodism; "He has the grand distinction of having travelled more extensively for the Gospel, preached it oftener, and preached it more eloquently, than any

other man, ancient or modern, within the same limits of life." A nobler eulogy could not crown his memory.

Whitefield has responded to the call, "Friend, come up higher;" but for twenty-one years Wesley remains in the Church militant, a blessing to the world. He lived to see his itinerant preachers multiply until they numbered 550, and the members of his societies increase to 140,000.

The vast machinery of Wesleyan Methodism, a most beneficent and soul-saving agency, is now spread over the whole world, and is too well known to require minute description. Standing side by side with the Presbyterian Church, whose doctrines and government Whitefield embraced, like twin sisters these two great evangelical and missionary Churches rise far above any other Protestant Church in numbers: and in zeal, in purity of doctrine, in Scriptural polity, and in Christian activity, may fairly be described as truly catholic and apostolic. What Patrick and Columba, Wycliffe and Huss, Tyndale and Latimer, Luther, Calvin, and Knox were to the respective Churches of their day—great centres of spiritual life and evangelical teaching—that were the Wesleys and Whitefield in the eighteenth century. The Church ever since their time has been richer, and brighter, and better for their earnest, loving ministry, and for their efforts to lift up professing Christians above mere forms, and ceremonies, and doctrines, into conscious fellowship with Christ, and a holy, happy, consecrated life.

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